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OTHER DAYS

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OTHER DAYS

RECOLLECTIONS OF RURAL ENGLAND AND OLD VIRGINIA 1860-1880

BY

A. G. BRADLEY

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PREFACE

NONE of the conventional apologies for a reminiscent volume, fortunately for the writer, are, in this case, called for. Neither the importunities of friends nor the problematical edification of descendants have anything to say to these pages. For they were written solely at the instigation and request of my publishers, who have kindly allowed me to absolve myself from any egotistic intention by disclosing the fact here. Furthermore, they were good enough to read the proof-sheets through, blue pencil in hand, at my request; and in declining to use the latter, I only hope they were discreet. My aim was to be as impersonal as the nature of the book, which is, for the most part, frankly and intentionally light, allowed. I am not at all sure that I have succeeded. But, in any case, I fancy that the scenes and characters recalled in these pages are somewhat out of the common run dealt with in books of this particular kind, which seem concerned, for the most part, with town and city life. Fortunately, too, the period covered by them closes long before the habit of writing books fell upon the author. So all temptation to drop into conventional and somewhat overbeaten paths, and perhaps a worse form of egotism, is happily removed.

The sub-title is neither exact nor sufficiently inclusive in its nature, but it is the nearest approach to a definition of the contents that we could arrive at within the necessary compass.

A. G. B.

RYE.

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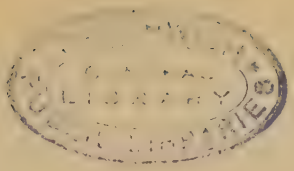


OTHER DAYS

CHAPTER I

TWO GRANDFATHERS—WALES, SUFFOLK, AND THE ISLE OF MAN

Let me hasten at once to disclaim in the above superscription any weak concession to convention. The two worthies who are the subject of this inadequate chapter are introduced upon the strength of their own very conspicuous qualities, and the reputation which each in his own way, and in a different degree, enjoyed with a past generation.

Thirty or forty years ago there was not, I suppose, a clergyman of ordinary knowledge and culture, or a layman of the slightest theological bent in all England to whom *Bradley's Sermons* were not by name at least familiar as a theological classic, though fading even then out of practical acquaintance. The Evangelical school held them in high repute, the High Churchmen recognised in them models of pulpit eloquence and scholarly style, while they were widely and, no doubt, often wisely, preached by young clerics in the security of remote country churches. In the ecclesiastical anecdotage of a former day their author figured quite often in the popular part of the mysterious stranger in a rural church listening to one of his own discourses. The playful passages with the preacher in the vestry or at the church door after service, which usually wound up these stories, are no doubt often chimerical, for the temptation to the anecdotist is irresistible, but the situation, I believe, was actually not infrequent.

My grandfather married when just of age, and, I think,

before he had done with Oxford, and as he inherited nothing from his parents but good brains and the grit that is generally accredited to a Yorkshire strain, laid a burden of premature work and anxiety upon himself that probably accounted for his delicate health throughout life. His early anxieties must have been considerable, from the arrival in quick succession of the first half of a family of twenty-one children, that were eventually born to him by two marriages, most of whom lived beyond middle age, or are still living. Ordained deacon at twenty-three, he was already, strange as it now seems, Headmaster of Wallingford Grammar School, and served apparently in conjunction with this the small parish of Stoke, in the neighbourhood. At twenty-four, in the year 1813, he was installed as curate-in-charge, and practically vicar, of High Wycombe. He had already made a useful reputation for scholarship, had attracted many pupils, and edited various classical text-books, one of them in collaboration with the famous Dr. Valpy, who had been his master at Reading School. He now began to make a reputation for preaching. His church filled, and a proposal was made to extend its accommodation by the erection of galleries, while his published sermons delivered at Wycombe, like the later ones at Clapham and Glasbury, had a wide and continuous sale. Private pupils followed him to Wycombe, for whose accommodation the roomy old vicarage, still, I believe, standing, proved extremely serviceable. Among these were Smith O'Brien,[1] afterwards the Irish rebel, and Professor Bonamy Price.

With one exception, my grandfather's sons of both families followed one another through public schools to Oxford, where all won scholarships and achieved a success that floated some into a comfortable and useful career, and others to higher distinction, while nearly all of his daughters

[1] He was always remembered with peculiar affection as a most lovable and attractive youth.

married, and eight of his family are still alive. He began to send his sons away to school in the twenties of the last century. In 1869 his youngest was still at Cheltenham College, an exhibitioner (afterwards a Fellow) of Baliol, and also playing in the cricket eleven against Marlborough, from which the headmaster, one of his elder half-brothers, was just retiring! The eldest son of this large family was born in, or about, the year of Waterloo. The youngest daughter, then still an unmarried girl, and a distinguished exponent of lawn tennis in its earlier days, was playing with W. Renshaw in the International mixed doubles at Dublin in 1881, and in the same period contributing to *Blackwood* and *Macmillan*. These facts are noted merely for their physiological interest and for the remarkable span of years bridged by the members of a single family, with the sustained vitality therein implied.[1]

It was not only in preaching and teaching that Charles Bradley was proficient in his early days at High Wycombe. But his indifference to autobiographical detail—and he was not a man to be drawn—left it to the more curious or more interested of his family to extract from local survivors, while they still survived, the impression left by his ten or twelve years of ministration there. For any purpose here it will be enough to quote the testimony of one of these veterans which was to the effect that 'nobody in Wycombe even bought a horse without asking Mr. Bradley's advice'; and as it is tolerably certain that equine science must have been among the very least of his accomplishments, the tribute is the more emphatic and comprehensive. Two volumes of High Wycombe sermons were published before 1820, and before the author was thirty, and in the next ten years ran through nearly as many editions. One volume was dedicated to Lord Liverpool, and, so far as the personal note was con-

[1] The two youngest surviving sons of this family are Mr. F. H. Bradley of Merton College, Oxford, the well-known writer on philosophy, and Professor A. C. Bradley (Balliol College, Oxford), late Professor of English Literature at Glasgow and of Poetry at Oxford.

cerned, 'in gratitude for unsolicited favours,' the other to Dr. Valpy as 'a mark of affectionate friendship.' His sermons had attracted much attention, and, I think, through Bishop Ryder, the only Evangelical on the bench, preferment came in the shape of the living of Glasbury, a large and important parish beyond Hay, and just inside Wales. It was cut in half by the Wye, which also here divides the counties of Brecon and Radnor. On the south side it ran far into the wilds of the Black Mountains of Brecon, including the remotely situated church of Capel-y-Ffyn at the head of the beautiful Vale of Llanthony. On the north side it spread up into the sheep farms and grouse moors of Radnor Forest. The parish church, which was rebuilt in my grandfather's time, stands beside the main road into Central Wales on the Breconshire bank of the Wye. The parish has since been divided, and a church erected on the Radnor side, where the chief portion of the actual village of Glasbury, together with the old vicarage, lies. It was a singular transplantation for a scholar and pulpit orator, with, for his years, an already considerable reputation, from the heart of a home county to what in pre-railroad days was an isolated and comparatively wild one. The vicarage, a picturesque little edifice against whose very walls the waters of Wye flung themselves in all moods, was quickly condemned as a place of abode by the new incumbent. But at the west end of the parish, not far from the famous old hostelry of the Three Cocks, standing among generous breadths of green meadow, wood, and corn land, with the shapely folds of the Black Mountains rising 2500 feet above, was the large and picturesque old Tudor manor-house of Dderw. It was an original nest of the Morgan family, now represented by Lord Tredegar. It still belongs to them, and is now again occupied by a member of that house. But for all time that

matters here, it was occupied either by the tenant of the large farm attached to it, or by others. My grandfather had it for a time, at any rate, a matter of interest to me, as my father's earliest infantile recollections were associated with a place which he never saw again in his life. Three or perhaps four years of Glasbury was enough for my grandfather. Not that he didn't suit Glasbury, but it certainly did not suit him, and the sense that his talents were in great part thrown away upon sheep farmers and peasants, must have been overmastering. Those days were not these; the pulpit and its influence were held, above all by the Low Church school, of infinitely more relative importance than now; and if the fact that a fresh edition of his Wycombe sermons was being called for almost every year must have, in more than one way, been comforting, the lack of a qualified audience must have been felt in time by the most conscientious and devoted of brilliant young men. But at an opportune moment St. James, Clapham, then just built, was offered him, with a congregation ready to open their arms wide, and a pulpit that was practically metropolitan.

Now Clapham in those days was a bowery open suburb, with fine houses scattered around its spacious common, and much affected by substantial city magnates and well-to-do professional folk. It was renowned for its serious atmosphere, and everybody knows that the Clapham School was identified with the leading minds of the Evangelical party, among whom my grandfather, for about a quarter of a century till his final retirement in 1852, was a conspicuous figure. Nothing indeed but the misfortune of belonging to the then unpopular party in a theological sense prevented his promotion to higher rank in the Church, though there is no evidence that he fretted about this in any way, or was otherwise than content with the influence

he exercised in some forty years of pulpit eloquence that reached every corner of the land. For, if the Glasbury sermons fell on uncritical ears, they went abroad in bound volumes, and ran through many editions. The Clapham sermons, though delivered to crowded and educated congregations, followed suit. Few libraries where theology found any place in those days were without them. They were free from controversial acerbity, and considered models of style. In the opinion of a well-known publisher, they enjoyed the largest, or nearly the largest, circulation of sermons ever known in the trade. They are now virtually forgotten. Their author was a tall, handsome man, with a fine intellectual head and face. I remember him very well in his later days of retirement at Cheltenham, and as a boy being tolerably in awe of him.

My grandfather retained the living of Glasbury till his death, in all forty-seven years, and must therefore be accounted among the pluralists of olden times. But he put in a resident curate of standing and ability, and as a matter of fact spent more on the parish than he ever took out of it. He was quite right from any standpoint to retain the living in those lax days, and insure its occupancy by a qualified person, while from his own, the next worst thing for the parish to being served by a thirsty foxhunter, would have been the influence of a cleric of either Latitudinarian or High Church views.[1] Pluralism of this kind was surely venial, a very different thing from that of some of the Welsh bishops of his day, and the period preceding it, or rather of the English divines who were good enough to accept the Episcopal emolument. It was their common practice to put vacant livings *in commendam*, to keep

[1] On any suggestion of giving it up the vicar was begged by his parishioners not to do so. He preached at Glasbury every year till near his end, and helped by his wealthy congregation at Clapham had been accustomed to take down annual contributions, clothing, etc. for the poor.

them vacant, that is to say, and annex the proceeds for their own use without any *quid pro quo* but some loose arrangement for the performance of Sunday services. That prince of pluralists and nepotists, Bishop Luxmoore, was still reigning at St. Asaph when my grandfather gave up residence in Wales. He laid the stipends of four-and-twenty vacant livings under more or less personal tribute which, with a few other incidentals, together with his legitimate income, brought in the tidy little sum of £11,000 a year. He took such care of his family that a clerical quartette of Luxmoores, composed of two sons, a nephew, and his lordship, drew over £20,000 a year between them, almost entirely out of the poor Welsh Church. The revenue of the St. Asaph diocese at this time was about £45,000, of which it was computed that much less than half was received by the clergy who lived on the spot, and did the work. A near contemporary of Luxmoore, Bishop Watson of Llandaff, is perhaps the most amazing and preposterous specimen of the highly-placed, though in his case lowly-born, absentee in modern Church history. He only visited his diocese twice in his thirty years of Episcopate, and obviously held this brief visitation to be a self-denying and meritorious enterprise. I once read through the life and letters of this politically-minded and extremely Whiggish country gentleman (by marriage) to see if the work contained any apology for, or any explanation of, this astounding record, or any consciousness of omission. There was no sign of either from cover to cover, the only thing at all bearing on absenteeism being a burst of righteous indignation at much evidence of it among his Llandaff clergy, and the dispatch of a circular by this colossal humorist to his far-away flock (for the bishop lived at Windermere), adjuring them to remain at their posts. A note of complaint at being passed over for promotion by a government whom, so he pathetically declares, he had, at

great and constant inconvenience, come up regularly to Westminster to support, runs through much of his correspondence. De Quincey, who was a neighbour, and knew him well, states that he knew for a positive fact that his importunities would have been actually rewarded with the Archbishopric of York if the Government of that moment had lasted one week more. This was not the fault of the Welsh Church, but of the British Government, and very largely of the Whigs, and it seems hard that their political successors should now punish an institution for long-amended defects due in great measure to their party's methods.

Glasbury, though on the Border, and an English-speaking parish, was in the diocese of St. David's, and some eighty miles from its cathedral. Among the very few recollections of Welsh clerical life in the early nineteenth century that have come down from my grandfather, is that of his first visit to his bishop at Abergwili Palace, who, of course, knew all about him and his Wycombe sermons. The Episcopal butler, who enjoyed neither of these advantages, gave him to understand confidentially, or by inference, that as a country vicar he ought to consider it a high compliment to be ushered in at the front door like any ordinary guest, and not at some humbler portal through which apparently the inferior clergy were conducted to a side apartment devoted to their reception. Many of the Welsh clergy of that day were in truth primitive enough, if often pious. Some, whether rough or polished, were worldly if not impious, while their flocks were gloriously superstitious. Three incidents derived from unimpeachable sources may serve respectively as illustrations of each type, and all of them relate to Radnorshire. With the first my grandfather was personally concerned, and at the time was stopping at the old Pump House at Llandrindod, which then, I think, alone provided civilised accommodation for visitors

to the Wells. Among the latter, on this occasion, was a distinguished statesman, I rather think Lord Liverpool himself, who, with two or three other guests, including my grandfather, walked over to Sunday morning service at a small church among the hills. The little edifice had a mean and bare interior, but was well attended by a rustic congregation. The parson was hardly distinguishable in degree from any of his flock till he mounted the pulpit, where he held forth to such purpose, and with such earnestness, that his visitors, on talking the sermon over during the walk home, decided to offer him some token of their high appreciation. This ultimately assumed the form of a five-pound note, and my grandfather undertook to walk over the next day and deliver the offering in such manner as the circumstances should suggest. On reaching the vicarage he was informed that the parson was out, but that if he had come by way of the village he must unavoidably have passed him on the road. The visitor replied that he had passed nobody but a labourer trimming the hedge. To shorten the tale, this proved to be no less than the eloquent preacher of the preceding day, and when accosted he came out of the ditch with some surprise, wiping his hands on his corduroys. My grandfather opened the interview by thanking him for the edification afforded to himself and a party of friends by his sermon, and then proceeded to apprise him of the distinguished person who had so opportunely made one of them. To his surprise the then famous name was received without any sign of recognition, so with due delicacy the chief object of the mission was introduced, and the bank-note handed over. It was received, however, unfolded, and contemplated with so blank a look that my grandfather was taken aback, and began to fear he had wounded the susceptibilities of a hyper-sensitive saintly soul. It was soon evident, however, that such alarms were groundless. For

the vicar, or curate-in-charge, after a prolonged inspection of the note, at length exclaimed with a bewildered air, 'And indeed of what use is this piece of paper to me, and what will I do with it?' The astounding truth then dawned upon the envoy that this worthy soul had never seen a bank-note before. 'Do with it? why take it to the bank at Builth, of course, and they will give you five pounds for it.' The revulsion from bewildered embarrassment to heartfelt gratitude at such an unexpected windfall completes the tale which, as evidence of what was then possible even in English-speaking Wales, by a witness of serious habit, little given to anecdote, and incapable of embroidery, is, I think, worth narrating. It is less worthy of note perhaps that the subject of the incident informed his visitor that it was financially necessary for him to hire out as a day labourer, for every one knows this was common enough at the time in Cumberland and Westmoreland.

As a sample of quite another type of old-time parson, a late acquaintance of mine, who was related to a former Bishop of St. David's, and for many years in early life his private chaplain, told me the following story among other entertaining reminiscences of his official duties. A certain sporting character, the Vicar of R——, not a hundred miles from Glasbury, indulged his convivial tastes to such an extent that the echo of his performances at last penetrated to the bishop's ears. His lordship thereupon summoned the delinquent to Abergwili to give an account of himself. The season was September, and an answer came in due course, regretting the vicar's inability, through indisposition, to comply with the bishop's request, the nature of his complaint being indicated by the extraordinary statement that he had 'eaten so many partridges the shot incommoded him '(*sic*). This delightfully original diagnosis turned out to have some sort of foundation in fact. For it transpired

that his reverence, overcome by the exertion of a day's shooting, and the thirst it promoted, was discovered by an unfeeling wag extended on his back upon a bench near the village tavern in a deep sleep with his mouth wide agape. This was before the days of breechloaders, and the vicar's shot flask lying handy, the other applied its spout to its owner's receptive mouth and clicked into it the regulation charge of an ounce or more of shot.

In this same neighbourhood of Glasbury there also occurred an incident, related at great length in the local papers of the day, which sheds an interesting light on the superstitions still prevalent in the beginning of the last century. In this case an usurious and unpopular tanner of Henllan, near Builth, had been recently laid to what proved an uneasy rest in the churchyard of Disserth. For this malignant soul refused to lie in peace, and took to leaping up behind farmers as they rode away from Builth after dark, and causing them to gallop for their very lives, with the devil himself, as it literally seemed, astride behind them. The terror of this supernatural jester grew at length so insupportable it was felt that life would not be worth living till the nimble ghost was laid. Its achievements can only be taken on trust, but as regards the manner of its exorcising there is no doubt whatever, the contemporary press giving a full report of it, which I have read.

Now Mr. Jones, the then vicar of Cefnllys, a spot familiar enough to visitors at the now transformed and fashionable Llandrindod, seems to have enjoyed some reputation for 'spirit laying,' as well as being in other respects a person of light and leading. His services were engaged for this urgent case, and the function which ensued was a great and solemn one. For the people of the neighbourhood crowded to Disserth Church, and grouping themselves around the outside at such respectful distances as

their natural fears suggested, awaited the uncanny performance. Parson Jones, heading a short procession of the neighbouring clergy, then entered the building, while the spectators waited without in awestruck silence. No sign, however, was vouchsafed them till presently, one by one, the assisting clergy came out of the church and joined the crowd, admitting that their efforts had so far been fruitless. Mr. Jones, however, nothing daunted, continued to wrestle by himself with the stubborn spirit of the tanner of Henllan, though what his method of exorcism was like is not related. But after a long and anxious interval he emerged from the church door with the welcome announcement that he had at last succeeded in driving the malicious spirit into the shape of a bluebottle fly, which he held up for exhibition between his finger and thumb. The relief of the audience seems to have been heartfelt and genuine. The bluebottle was carefully enclosed in an empty snuff-box, and lest the tanner should get up to his fearsome tricks again, the snuff-box having been solemnly borne thither, was attached to the point of a stick and thrust as deep into Coedeiddig bog, near Caerwnon, as the vicar could drive it. For an ancient faith had it that if a spirit were laid in wet soil the effect was lasting, but if in dry ground it would be on the move again, and be ready for trouble in a hundred years.

My grandfather, who died in 1871, is not even yet quite forgotten in South Wales. For though he only, I think, paid annual visits to Glasbury, he appears to have occasionally attended clerical meetings, and he was a man who made an impression not easily forgotten. In short, they were very proud of him and his wide reputation. The latest county history of Breconshire includes him among its historical 'worthies' and prints two or three pages of biographical matter under his name. But even more than this his sermons, rendered into Welsh, were preached

widely by the Welsh clergy. Twenty odd years ago, when I first knew Wales intimately, many an elderly country parson on hearing my name used to thus address me: 'Are you any relassh——' My father being then Dean of Westminster, I was so constantly being asked the question, which this seemed obviously to portend, that it used to seem almost like a voice from prehistoric times, and at first surprised me no little when the query was completed, 'Are you any relasshon to the Reverend Charles Bradley?' And when I confessed to that honour these ancient ones would hold my hand and say, 'Dear me! *dear* me!' as only a Welshman can say it. And I used to feel sure sometimes from the look in their eye that they were on the verge of confessing, 'How many of his sermons have I preached?'

My maternal grandfather lived into his ninety-ninth year, and only died in 1889. What is yet more to the point, he retained every faculty till his death, and within a year or so of it could chat as lucidly, over a cigar and the single tumbler of whisky-and-water that he never missed at night, of England in the Napoleon era as any of his varied audiences could discuss modern Oxford, or Manitoba, or a new ironclad. More even than all this, he had a perfectly marvellous memory, and delighted to talk of old times, and possessed a vast fund of anecdote relating to just the kind of things one likes to hear about, and that books fail to tell us. He was known to most of his friends as 'The Archdeacon,' to some of us near to him as 'The Venerable.' For once an archdeacon always an archdeacon, and in middle life he had held that office, together with the Vicar-Generalship of the Isle of Man, and the stories he could tell of that then remote and rather lawless country in the thirties were numerous and lively. When he gave up his rectory in East Anglia at something over eighty, he was preternaturally active. It was an extremely fat living and an uncommonly

fine house, and the patron, Lord S——, sold the advowson for £10,000, just as my grandfather was about to retire. Neither the purchaser nor the vendor took into account the old rector's amazing vitality, and both made a rather bad bargain. For the Archdeacon was to retain, I think, by agreement or by legal custom, a half interest in the stipend till his death, and the vendor, by special agreement, was to pay four per cent. on the purchase-money he had received to a third party who advanced it for the appointee till the outgoing incumbent's death, a contingency which all these unwary parties seemed to regard as impending. So the new rector for seventeen years received only half his stipend. Worse still, the ex-patron and vendor had by that time paid back in interest to the third and outside party just about the entire sum he had received for the advowson. Till the end of his life my grandfather, who had a wonderful soft heart, always alluded to his disappointed successor with a gentle sigh as, 'Robinson, poor fellow!' which I blush to own always made me laugh.

But the best incident in what it was impossible not to regard as a humorous situation occurred just before the sale, and hurt nobody. For an intending clerical purchaser arrived unannounced one day at the rectory from Ireland, with apparently neither manners nor tact. He was positively agitated from the hurry in which he had made the journey, and expressed himself with interesting candour as greatly pleased at having arrived *in time*. (It will be remembered that advowsons are only marketable during an incumbent's lifetime.) The vendor's solicitor had possibly represented the Archdeacon as having one foot in the grave. The old gentleman was considerably nettled at the Irishman's brusqueness, and at eighty-one was in a physical condition capable of taking it out of him. He spoke of him and wrote him down as a 'dandy and a snob.' His wife

apparently was a peer's daughter, and 'Lady B——' was introduced in every other sentence with that ingenuous vulgarity that only a certain type of half-baked Hibernian, man or woman, can accomplish to perfection. The Archdeacon, with malice intent, as he admitted, and casting an eye on his visitor's patent leather boots, proposed a walk over the glebe—a large one. The offer being accepted, he proceeded to push through the thickest part of the woods, and over the worst gaps in the fences, himself putting his very best leg foremost. The perspiring Irishman, on his return to the rectory, didn't ask any more questions, and when he drove back to the agent's office at C—— was extremely curt. 'What did you send me out to look at G—— for? There is an old fellow there more active than I am, who can buck over fences like an antelope.'

The Archdeacon spent the greater part of many remaining years in a pleasant house still standing on Oak Hill, Surbiton, which looks down on that resounding station. His acquaintance had been pretty large before, and now as the years rolled on his reputation as a 'grand old man,' accessible, sociable, and eloquent of things past, and a prodigious wonder for his years, spread far beyond the normal circles of kin and friendship; and in regard to the former, as he had fifteen children who mostly lived to marry and have families, his own descendants, who all adored him, were a tolerably formidable body.

All kinds of people, often with the slenderest introductions, used to make pilgrimages to the pleasant leafy hilltop at Surbiton, for the purpose of sitting at the old gentleman's feet and hearing him talk. If he was a little overdone by all this he never showed it, for he was the very pink of old-world courtesy, a virtue which came in his case obviously straight from the kindest of hearts. He constantly ran up to town, and when well on in the nineties was extremely touchy at the slightest solicitude being shown for him by

a companion on crossing a crowded thoroughfare. He baptised and married people by the dozen, and thought nothing of a long journey for such purposes. No ceremony of the kind among his own numerous kith and kin was considered complete without his assistance, which he thoroughly enjoyed giving. The position of patriarch was a delight to him, and he was never a bore, and always among the most cheerful of the company. Though intensely and consistently religious all his life upon the old Evangelical lines, with almost none, however, in later life, if ever, of its depressing asperities, and the last person to recognise any credit in mere physical and human performance, it is needless to say he was secretly proud of his hale old age, and frankly gratified at the number of brides and bridegrooms and young mothers, outside his own family circle in various parts of England, who declared him to be indispensable to the day of their lives. So he travelled about good-naturedly here and there almost to the last year of his life, and figured frequently in the press as the clerical wonder of his day, which I am sure pleased the dear old man immensely.

In connection with these labours of love two humorous incidents come back to me. One pleased him and the other did not, though he bore it heroically. The first was on some ordinary occasion, of the *locum tenens* kind, when, in the absence of the vicar, he undertook to marry a couple in humble life at J——, near Eastbourne. The bride in this case had no arms, and the Archdeacon, who loved a joke if propriety could be stretched to permit of it, persuaded himself that for lack of fingers it was incumbent that the ring should be placed upon the lady's fourth toe, which he solemnly instructed the bridegroom to do, the bride placing her foot upon the altar rails. But this was nothing like all. For when the party adjourned to the vestry, it transpired that the woman habitually used her toes with

almost the facility that normal folk used their fingers in all domestic labours, and more than this, she proceeded to sign the register by these means with the greatest ease. This was in the late eighties, when he was ninety-seven, and it made quite a little sensation. One of the picture papers, transforming the wedding from a rustic affair into a fashionable function, had a half-page illustration of the scene, which I now possess. The Archdeacon after this was deluged with letters from deformed people of all sorts, describing their shifts, skill, and contrivances for making the best of their respective infirmities. The press took up the matter, as it was in the silly season, and I think one armless correspondent went so far as to say that he brushed his hair with his foot!

The other occasion was not of such public interest, and was of earlier date, and concerned a like ceremony in which the present writer was nearly concerned. The scene happened to be one of the then most ritualistic West End churches, and the officiating clergy of the bride's connection being of that persuasion circumstances were too strong for the Archdeacon. In his Isle of Man days, and indeed for long afterwards, there would unquestionably have been a stormy scene in the vestry at any attempt to dress him up, and the occasion would have been further improved with a vengeance. But his liberalism and concession as regards others to new phases of thought were remarkable in the old age of so staunch and lifelong a Protestant. On this occasion he was taken, as it were, by surprise, and was in a minority of one in four. He had either not known, or had not realised the character of this particular church, and furthermore had unfortunately reckoned on its resources for attiring himself in normal fashion. The proffered cassock he did reject absolutely, so the short surplice associated with it, and in this case embroidered at

the bottom, was donned under protest, and reached a little below his waist, while a white stole, heavily gilded, was cast about him, and depending far below his surplice, presented a most uncanny appearance. There in the very trappings of the Scarlet Woman, and out in the church with the others, he confronted the congregation, to the amazement and, I am afraid, prodigious amusement of his friends, relatives, and descendants, who were there in force. He behaved beautifully afterwards, and only heaved one brief and confidential sigh of regret in the vestry to the person most concerned that the event had not been celebrated in a more orthodox atmosphere. Time, however, softened the memory of it so effectively that it became one of the jokes of his later years, to tell how he had married his first grandchild in the 'garb of a Popish priest.'

He was born in 1791 in Suffolk, but, left an orphan in almost infancy, was adopted by his father's elder brother, a married man without a son, and of considerable property near Southwold, to which he himself succeeded. My grandfather's reminiscences of his uncle's establishment at the opening of the century were always qualified with a slightly mysterious air of reserve and disapproval. That high jinks, common enough in the country at that period, went on there, he has left written as well as oral evidence. As a serious Evangelical, with the unusual accompaniment of a sense of humour, he was torn strongly between the desire to tell good stories of an extremely worldly circle, and the restraining thought that as the period concerned antedated his own conversion by several years, he would be himself automatically involved in these reprehensible goings-on. However, they only amounted to the gentlemen being often too elevated after dinner to join the ladies in the drawing-room, and to late nights of whist at guinea points. I have in my possession two fat MS. volumes

of journals, notes, and recollections in the Archdeacon's small but admirable handwriting. Practically everything of interest contained therein has been familiar to us out of the writer's own mouth at various periods up till one that, as I have said, may be almost accounted as yesterday. But the abounding fragments of contemporary social life, manners, and customs, intermixed with religious endeavour and contemporary theological opinions, would, even with the latter omitted, make almost an octavo volume of themselves, and perhaps some day may do so. For the present it is enough that such crumbs as there is room for here will at least be free from the possible inaccuracies of second-hand narration.

These particular Philpots or Philipots were lineal descendants of city merchants, of whom that famous Lord Mayor who English histories describe to us as equipping a fleet and fighting the French upon his own account, and sumptuously entertaining Edward III., was the notable progenitor.[1] Philpot Lane still bears testimony to their prosperous career, which terminated, however, long before my grandfather's day. The 'late Mr. Philpot,' a style of allusion intended, so we took it, to combine filial respect with a measure of disapproval, and which had a humorous sound nearly a century after his death, had the stoutest convictions that he was legal heir to the whole, or part, of that famous city thoroughfare which the negligence of a lethargic forebear in East Anglia had, in some manner, lost hold of. He had collected a mass of documentary evidence, and seems to have intended, or even to have commenced,

[1] Sir John Philpot (1371-1381), M.P. for London; headed opposition to John of Gaunt; appointed joint treasurer for the French war (1377) at the request of the Commons; Mayor, 1378; assisted Richard II. during peasants' revolt (*Dict. of Nat. Biography*). Archdeacon Philpot, Fellow of New College, the Marian martyr burned at Smithfield, was also a member of this family.

some legal proceedings which, fortunately no doubt for his heir, were interrupted by his death. I believe, however, that till a later date the existence of this Philpot claim was recognised to the extent of a bond of indemnity exacted by the vendors of any portion of this property. The 'late Mr. Philpot,' however, if he liked to see his friends push the bottle briskly, was himself either proof or more temperate, as well as being an astute man in all rural affairs, and not without elegant tastes. For he was an enthusiastic musician, and played admirably himself upon a Stradivarius violin, which was the apple of his eye. It was afterwards smashed in an accident, and the broken pieces sold by my grandfather for £80. There was a music-room in the house, and amateur performances were given from time to time, in which the adopted heir was usually impressed as organ-blower. Overcome, on one of these occasions, by sleep at a critical moment in an Oratorio, a comic opera scene was suddenly introduced in the shape of an infuriated uncle chasing a delinquent nephew round the concert-room with a fiddle bow. At another time it is recorded how two mysterious men called at the house late in the evening, with whom his uncle was for some time closeted. They proved to be leaders of the press-gang, and the interview related to the directions in which it would be desirable or otherwise to prosecute their activities. This was just before Trafalgar.

Bury Grammar School, a popular resort of East Anglian youth in those days, came next, though apparently in this case as a preparation for Eton. An Etonian was then headmaster, 'an able scholar, but vain and conceited.' Severe sixth form fagging was in vogue at Bury, and my grandfather as a small boy performed all kinds of laborious, to say nothing of unlawful, services for the late Baron Alderson (father of the late Lady Salisbury), among others, while Bishop Blomfield was his schoolfellow. From his

activity as a climber he was much in request for fetching illicit goods from the town at night, till he fell from the playground wall on one occasion with a bottle of wine in his pocket, on to some pailings, and with such serious results that exposure was unavoidable, and there was a general row. The teaching was good at Bury. I have the original of a copy of Latin verses shown up in 1805 at the age of fourteen, by my grandfather, which are so excellent as to suggest an altogether maturer period of life. But Bury was unfortunately given up at that early age, and the Eton intention also abandoned, the aunt apparently being possessed of nervous tremors at the prospect of a great public school. By one of those parental infatuations, as they seem to us, but common enough a hundred years ago, the altogether promising youth was removed to Dedham Grammar School, where he became almost at once head boy! There he remained for three years, and got no further teaching of any consequence. He read subsequently for a few weeks at Dover, and went up to Christ's College, Cambridge, in the October term of 1808. There were exciting years previous to this. Country banks were tottering and breaking, and there had been a great run on that at Halesworth. The uncle, owing to the state of the times, kept a considerable sum of cash in his house, and at this crisis, as a boy of fifteen, the nephew was sent on horseback at top speed to the support of the bank with a bag of notes and money strapped on to him, and the crowd was so great he had some difficulty in forcing his way through it to the door. The fear of invasion was, of course, constant on the east coast, particularly before Trafalgar. Plate and valuables were sent from Suffolk to the midland counties, Weedon, apparently, with its large garrison, being a popular place of deposit. Lord Huntingfield had a troop of yeomanry in constant readiness, and Mr. Philpot raised a troop of

volunteer cavalry who, on disbanding, presented him with a piece of plate which still survives as a reminder of those palpitating years.

One has often wished to know more, on first-hand evidence, of the life of an average undergraduate in the opening years of the century, before organised amusements had any place in university life. The Archdeacon was always inclined to be a trifle reticent in this direction on the plea that he had been a 'worldly youth,' a designation that no doubt had merely the relative significance one would expect from an orthodox Evangelical in after life. He used to hunt occasionally—'hiring from "Browning's"'—and also to shoot snipe in the surrounding fens. Brought up to shooting and hunting, he was efficient at both, but with the gun more expert and knowledgeable than common. His notes and journals are full, as were his stories, of shooting in those old flintlock days, and of the ornithology connected with it. Neither cricket nor boat-racing seem to have associated themselves in his mind with Cambridge. There was actually, I take it, very little of either in the years before Waterloo. Yet the journal has several references to its author as a cricketer. A cricket match incidentally prevented him coming out a wrangler. For while reading for his degree with other Cambridge men at Hastings, in the Long Vacation of 1811, he had been 'playing in a cricket match on the hill,' when suddenly summoned home to the deathbed of his only sister, then about to be married. He slept from fatigue through a pouring wet night on the outside of the London coach, and only just caught the Yarmouth mail, thence travelling in his soaking wet clothes all the way into Suffolk. This produced an illness which developed into brain fever, and prevented any serious reading till the tripos came on in January. My grandfather wanted to take an Ægrotat degree, but the dons of Christ's urged

him to go into the Senate House, then frozen stiff with the coldest spell so far experienced in that century. He achieved a ninth place in the senior ops. bracketed with several others. Then, oddly as it reads now, he 'exercised his right of challenge,' and by some further and long obsolete test, mysterious to a modern, he floored the rest of 'the bracket,' and took place above them. Ninth senior optime would hardly qualify now for a fellowship at the smallest college, and those at Christ's were very good ones. But no doubt the college gauged his all-round abilities, for they elected him eighteen months afterwards. Possibly, too, other qualifications, as was the custom in those days, counted for something.

It may or may not be worth recording as a coincidence that he succeeded on the very same day, 11th September 1814, to his property and to a fellowship, which does not, somehow, seem equitable! He was shooting partridges at the moment from a friend's house, near Newmarket, when his uncle's steward arrived post-haste in a trap with the news that the old man was dying. His nephew reached home an hour after his death, and found himself executor as well as possessor of a comfortable but complicated estate in land and houses, etc., as well as some leased farms which he had to carry on. These things, however, are of no consequence here, but a fragment from a Cambridge journal, just a hundred years ago, may be of interest, as illustrating a day or two of college life :—'April 13th, 1812. —Woollaston, who kept under me in College, and I set off in one of Sapsford's boats at night to row to Brandon; got as far as Prickwillow: next morning started at 5 A.M. I went into the fen and in an hour shot four couple of snipe. Breakfasted at Littleport (he little thought his future wife was in the rectory); found a man to steer the boat; reached the sluice within two miles of Brandon at 11.30 P.M.; didn't

know whether we had taken the right creek, or what the place was in the distance where lights were gleaming. Forced the gates open, and approaching nearer I waded across the fen to reach the church I could see by moonlight, and finding it was Brandon, ran back and got the boat as near the town as I could. All were in bed, and we wandered about for an hour before we could make any publican hear.'

Residing in Cambridge for the requisite period, and otherwise looking after his affairs in Suffolk, which incidentally necessitated a good deal of farming, filled up his time. There are numerous stories and anecdotes of local life and people at this time, and a good deal about the Poor Law, against the evils of which my grandfather assisted in petitioning the Crown. One entry is perhaps worth noting. His bailiff, Tom Doddington, came to him in fine weather just before harvest, full of gloomy prophecies of a wet autumn culled from those manifestations of Nature revealed only to the rustic close to the soil. His desire was to begin cutting at once, even if a little premature. 'Them spiders, rot 'em, have been rushing about and filling their webbes,' was one portent. His master acquiesced, and almost alone in the neighbourhood saved his grain in good condition, the spiders and the bailiff proving correct. It was a frightful harvest, and most of the grain sprouted in the shock. My grandfather sold his wheat for two hundred shillings a quarter to the local miller, to whom 'it proved of great service.' Think of this, ye Free Traders and Tariff Reformers alike! I happen to know that some sound wheat was sold at that figure in Devizes market in the same year, doubtless also in many other places. As well as his house in the country at Walpole, where his uncle's widow lived, he had one at Southwold still conspicuous near the Gunhill, which he more or less occupied himself. He became, after taking orders, High Bailiff of Southwold, took much interest in

the ever-pressing Poor Law question, kept conjointly with a neighbour a pack of harriers, and started a cricket club. He did also a great deal of shooting, bird collecting, and stuffing, the latter with the help of a clever keeper. Among his specimens were a hoopoe shot on Southwold Common, a Bohemian chatterer on the Bligh River, and a little bittern near Henham Marshes. These were presented to the Philosophical Society of Cambridge, whence the best specimens found their way to the Fitzwilliam Museum. Some quite large-sized and clever sketches of hunting scenes by the same hand are in my possession, and interesting if only from the detail of costume and action, and as the work of an actual 'thistle whipper' a hundred years ago.

A thrilling incident I have heard him relate many times occurred during the two or three years preceding his first marriage. There was at that time a dead set against the then master of Christ's on the part of all the Fellows, and for sufficient reasons, as he was soon afterwards ejected for malversation of the college funds. This made that dignitary watch narrowly for some chance of retaliation. While my grandfather was occupied with rural affairs down in Suffolk he received, one evening, a friendly but delayed message intimating that if he was not in chapel the next morning he might lose his expected Fellowship. He had been riding all day, but fortunately had his best horse, Marmion, fresh in the stable. So he left Southwold on its back at 9 P.M., not pulling bit till he reached Bury, forty-two miles. There he called up the ostler of the Bell Inn on Stag Hill, fed his horse, and completed the remaining twenty-eight miles by 6.30, taking his place in chapel beneath the truculent gaze of his disappointed superior. The poor horse went stone blind next day, but his owner drove him in double harness for some time afterwards, till, breaking away from the groom one day in the stable-yard at Sibton

Park, he ran his head against a wall and killed himself.[1] My grandfather took deacon's orders from Bishop Bathurst, and married a cousin almost concurrently in 1816, preaching the ordination sermon in Norwich Cathedral two years later, when he was ordained priest. An extract from a contemporary Fellow of Christ's regarding the matrimonial business is characteristic :—'Leicester is married ; Haggitt and Millett are about to commit the same rash act. I wish some of the seniors would be seized with a similar frenzy.'

On his marriage my grandfather rented Sibton Park in the Southwold neighbourhood, the shooting of which had a great attraction for him. He was far enough, however, removed from the mere sporting parson. For he not only continued his Poor Law activities, but soon afterwards gave up sport, and took up his new calling seriously, though

[1] The Archdeacon was not yet a Fellow but expected to be elected to one then vacant, and his presence on that day for some reason, possibly a technical one, was urgent. He was, in fact, not elected to this one, but a few months later to that vacated by the election of a new master (Kaye) in place of Dr. Browne, ejected for reasons stated above. The latter had a grudge against my grandfather, who, together with others, expressed much suspicion of him. Hence the urgency of the ride, and possibly the reason of his non-election. But I am informed that the memory of the ride associated with some plot against the rider by Dr. Browne has been handed down orally at Christ's through the medium of Joseph Shaw, a contemporary and friend of my grandfather at the college and who remained in residence till old age—and for a short time, I think, as master. I am much indebted to Mr. G. H. M. Thompson and the Dean of Christ's for searching this period of the college records, which corroborate the accuracy of certain facts and dates, written down by my grandfather many years afterwards. Incidentally it appears that the Browne affair is a notable chapter in the history of the college, and is there known as 'The Captivity,' from his persecution of the Fellows prior to his ejection for using the college funds, of which the master had the sole charge, to his own advantage. Possibly it was owing to the temporary inconvenience caused by this gentleman's proceedings that Mr. Philpot is recorded in the books as having, while a Fellow in 1815, lent the college £2000 as I am informed. My grandfather writes Browne down as 'generally immoral.' It is perhaps in keeping with the times that later on he was presented to the important living of Gorleston !

not yet himself actually 'serious' in the sense he afterwards used the word. With a gift for preaching on the lines of his school and period, he was extremely fond of it. He was not vain of his style or eloquence as such, but was undoubtedly convinced, and no doubt with good reason, of his power to touch the heart of sinners from the pulpit—innumerable instances of these 'conversions' sprinkling his journals. At any rate he always succeeded in drawing good congregations. In 1819 his first wife died in childbirth, when he gave up Sibton, and presented himself to the living of Walpole, of small value, but then vacant and in his own gift. He put in a curate, which enabled him to gratify a desire to travel, a distraction his perfect health and activity, and much more than common all-round intelligence, well qualified him to enjoy.

The recollections of his foreign tours in those far-away times were the delight of his descendants, though for that matter he went to Turkey when he was nearly eighty. Being an old friend of Sir Andrew Halliday, then Court physician, he attended a levee of George IV., and his impressions of that monarch are among his notes. But much more interesting are those of a long tour in Europe in 1820. For though mainly on beaten tracks, such tracks were stimulating enough at that time with the long war still fresh in men's minds, while this particular traveller had something of a genius for getting just under the surface wherever he went. In Paris, for instance, where the natives even still were extremely prickly towards Britons, he made friends with three cultivated Anglophile Spaniards, two of whom spoke English, while the third, a friend of Southey's, conversed in Latin. The four were dining together at Prevot's in the Palais Royal on one occasion, when a party of five Frenchmen at the next table began inveighing in loud, offensive terms against the English and Spanish Con-

stitutions. Whereupon one of the Spaniards, Don Robler, started suddenly from his seat, and stamping violently, exclaimed in French, 'Sirs, you must be aware from our conversation that one of our party is an Englishman, and the others Spaniards, and your remarks must have been intended as an insult to our nations.' He then threw down his card. My grandfather, though he knew neither physical nor moral fear, and would cheerfully have gone to the stake, I am quite certain, merely for the evangelical doctrines that were now taking hold of him, was for this very reason shocked at the prospect of blood-letting in this, to him, impious fashion, and partly on his account. He used to describe his relief when one of the Frenchmen got up and commanded his friends to fill their glasses and drink to the constitutional Kings of England and Spain. The Spaniard replied, 'We accept your *amende honorable*, but remember the heads which could have planned and effected the glorious revolution in Spain itself will never want strong hands and bold hearts to maintain it against foes abroad and traitors at home.'

I must tear myself away in this brief record from a journal that is more than commonly interesting; Buckland, the future Dean of Westminster, figuring in it as the author's companion for some time. Among other things, he went to the Court of the Viceroy of Austria at Milan, whose recent marriage was being celebrated with great éclat. In 1822, as a widower of thirty, with one daughter living, the Archdeacon married Miss Vachell, daughter of the rector of Littleport, near Ely, who bore him fourteen children in twenty-three years, of whom most lived till middle age, and five are living now. He had in all seventeen children. No one who remembers the lady, even in her old age, would find any difficulty in crediting her husband's testimony that she was both a beautiful and an intelligent girl. A very few years after marriage, however, she, too, was 'converted,'

and for the rest of her long life, divided as it was between the uninterrupted exigencies of motherhood and thirty succeeding years of an invalid's room, she remained an uncompromising Evangelical of the old school, and as a distributor and indeed author, for she was a lady of parts, of religious books and leaflets almost to the last, indefatigable. The Vachell family, formerly of Coley Park, Reading, have some interest as prominent Parliamentarians among the landed gentry of Berkshire, one of them having represented Reading in the Long Parliament, and another, a lady, becoming Hampden's second wife. My grandmother and her parents had not long before suffered from a night attack and raiding of their house at Littleport during the great agricultural riots of that period. Apparently from its effects the Rector had a paralytic stroke, and was living in retirement at Aldeburgh, while the daughter in question carried the mark of it to her dying day.

The village of Littleport was, in fact, the scene of the most sanguinary riot of any in the whole country during this general uprising of labour, and the sacking of my great-grandfather's house, as a magistrate, is alluded to as a leading feature of it in Mr. and Mrs. Hammond's recent *History of the Village Labourer*. My grandmother, then a girl of about fourteen, and her parents had to run for their lives into the night just as they were in their evening clothes, she herself in a muslin dress and satin shoes. On reaching some temporary shelter, a shrubbery, I think, she suddenly remembered a valued family treasure, an heirloom watch, lying on the chimney-piece of one of the lower rooms, and pluckily determined to return and, if possible, recover it. So, slipping back across the lawn, she waited cautiously about the open French windows of the room which contained it, till the rioters, who were beginning to ransack the house, left the spot clear for a moment,

when she dashed in, snatched the prize, and got clear away with it into the darkness.

In the great trials which followed the riots, and resulted in the hanging of several and the transportation of many of the prisoners, she had to appear as an important witness, and, as already mentioned, the shock of the whole thing left a nervous affection, I well remember, still obvious in her old age. Her mother, who was a Jenyns of Bottisham Hall, familiar to all generations of Newmarket-going Cantabs., seems to have come out of the business unscathed, though she and her two daughters hurried in their light attire through the May night all the way to Ely, where a stout tradition maintains they gave the first alarm. It must be remembered that there was a genuine panic at that time among the country gentry, who could recall the horrors of the French Revolution. The frightfully harsh sentences meted out to hundreds of half-starved labourers, transportation for life, and sometimes even death, for proceedings that in some cases would hardly call for a fine under modern conditions, are a standing testimony to it. My grandmother's plucky return to the house, and the men she could thereby identify, made her testimony valuable. One of its victims was the brother of an old nurse, who was sentenced to death, and to the inevitable terrors of the witness-box, at such a tender age, were added the frightful imprecations of a faithful domestic !

The lighter pleasures of life had not yet been put aside by the newly married couple. Sir Andrew Halliday, who was going with George IV. on his notable visit (by sea) to Edinburgh, but in an accompanying ship, had got permission for his friend and his wife to join him off Southwold. But the boat in which they put off to the flotilla, through fog, mischance, or delay, fell behind time, and they were left lamenting. But, nothing daunted, my grandfather transferred

his trunks to his own carriage, and posted the whole way to Edinburgh. Near Bedford level they drove into a prize-fight. The combatants were bathed in blood, which so upset the bride of nineteen, still affected by the riots at Littleport, and the subsequent trials, that a doctor and rest were necessary at the next stopping place.

They reached Edinburgh, however, in time to see the great review and all the other doings of that memorable occasion. A full account of it, as witnessed by my grandfather, lies before me, and I have often heard him describe it. A great and novel sight, too, it must have been to a south country parson of that day! The couple were so delighted with Edinburgh and its people that they stayed there for nearly a year! I can only account for such prodigious and unpremeditated dissipation by the fact that their recent honeymoon had been brief and unadventurous, and that this was regarded as a second edition. They lodged in George Street, and met all kinds of people, Walter Scott and his wife among others, the comments upon whom are original. My grandfather had some grouse-shooting, too, on the Lammermoors, a rare and delightful experience for a provincial south country sportsman of the flint-lock period. But Scottish theology and theologians proved a potent attraction to his cast of mind, and this phase of Edinburgh life no doubt accounted for so protracted and belated a honeymoon, though he records numerous lay anecdotes, with legal and other witticisms, which sparkled in the modern Athens of that day.

I must pass over the rest of his Suffolk period at Southwold and Walpole, between which he divided his time, but one anecdote, though it relates to 1820, may be worth recording. The famous Dr. Whately, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin, was in that year inducted to the living of Halesworth, my grandfather as a neighbour doing the needful part

of the ceremony. 'When locked into the church Whately rang the bell with the great and particular vigour suggestive of his character. In conversational power I never met his equal, but he was a little rough in his denials, and wanted humility.' Knowing the writer the little friction is obvious, and absolutely characteristic is the manner in which a reproof was administered. 'He was staying with me, and offered to preach at Walpole. I consented on condition of choosing the text, which was readily agreed to. I therefore selected the words of Christ: "*Learn of Me, for I am meek.*"' While a young widower, my grandfather had taken a walking tour through England, extending from Suffolk to the Land's End, of which we possess the interesting notes he was so well qualified to make.

Tree-planting and the draining of marsh land, always a hobby, and stimulated in after life by frequent visits to friends in Holland, now largely took the place of sport as a recreation. But religious fervour, and the desire for a wider field of evangelical effort was burning strongly within him. Several overtures came from various quarters, and possibly flattered by the compliment, he very nearly accepted the most unsuitable of all, and become domestic chaplain to William IV., while, as Duke of Clarence, occupying Hampton Court. Some hitch in the matter of quarters at the last moment alone prevented his taking up the office. He would undoubtedly have made himself extremely agreeable, but a 'word in season' to king, prince, or duke, if his conscience moved him, would have been irresistible, and to do him justice would have caused him no tremors whatever.

But now came an offer altogether more suitable to his zeal and activity. For Dr. Murray, Bishop of Sodor and Man, then an ill-organised diocese of rough people and wild ways, and a queer clergy, asked him to take charge of the principal church in Douglas, and incidentally support him

in the diocese. This took my grandfather's fancy, and he left his native district, as it so turned out, for ever, as a resident, disposing gradually of his temporal interests therein. He revisited Southwold, though he had paid it some brief visits in middle life, when he was about ninety, preached in August to a crowded congregation from the pulpit he had so often occupied sixty or seventy years previously, and out-of-doors told local stories of prehistoric times, cracked jokes with old men whom he had christened at Walpole, Southwold, and Walberswick, and among other incidents was accosted by an unforgiving octogenarian whom he had put in the stocks in youth for flinging a dead cat through a neighbour's window. The affair created quite a flutter, and was duly celebrated in the newspapers, and enormously enjoyed by the hearty old gentleman himself.

His verbal recollections and copious MS. memoirs of the Isle of Man between 1828 and 1839, his period there, are so interesting as to make it a matter of regret that I have so little space for them here. There was trouble then in the island. The Duke of Atholl was its great man, and resided at Castle Mona, near Douglas, in later days a big hotel. The bishop was his nephew, and during some bitter disputes about a portion of his stipend that was paid in kind, chiefly potatoes! had been rudely assaulted at Bishop's Court, and had in consequence removed himself to Douglas, where he resided with Lord Strathallan at the Castle. There was a 'Duke's party' and a 'Manx party' in the island. The Bishop, moreover, was haughty of mien, which did not further his popularity. The complimentary nature of his invitation to my grandfather plainly shows that he did not consider the Manx clergy as socially eligible. So as an alien, and presumably a bishop's man, the latter found his work cut out. However, it suited him admirably. He cared nothing

for opposition, and in course of time became quite popular. There was then no reliable communication with the island. Passengers were dropped at Ramsey by the Scotch boat from Liverpool, and when the wind blew heavily on shore they had to go on to Scotland! My grandfather had a carriage which made three trips there before it could be landed at Ramsey, when it was 'as white as a sheet of paper.'

The unpopular bishop was very soon, and to his own relief, translated to Rochester, and urged my grandfather to go with him. The transport of an establishment and household gods by road and irresponsible sailing ships from East Anglia to the Isle of Man may well, one would fancy, have crushed out the slightest idea in the most active family man of nearly forty ever to move again. But I don't think this one minded such little jaunts at all. His private reason for declining the offer was a much more urgent one to him, namely, that the Bishop 'had obviously a contempt for Evangelical truth.' That he himself had made some way with the Manxmen may be inferred from a letter written to him soon afterwards by T. Christian, the chief Deemster, which concludes thus: 'Whatever complaints we might make against the late bishop, he has well-nigh redeemed them all by leaving behind him one zealous and sound minister.'

After a considerable interval Dr. Ward was appointed bishop, and the first notable event in my grandfather's experience was the offer by that dignitary of the Vicar-Generalship of the island. I blush to say that I cannot define with any precision the duties of this time-honoured and still, I believe, surviving office. Readers of Mr. Hall Caine's novels probably know more about it than I do. But, at any rate, the Vicar-General held periodical courts in which lay and ecclesiastical matters were mingled. There was a great outcry. Bishop Murray's Vicar-General had been a barrister and a layman, but his violent partisanship of the Atholl

faction had made his reappointment impossible. He was very angry, and made a scene at the opening of my grandfather's first court. The Manx clergy were also indignant that a foreign ecclesiastic should be preferred to one of themselves. The new Vicar-General had, of course, considerable experience of ordinary magisterial work, and soon mastered the Manx laws which affected his court. He had, in fact, at first declined the appointment on the plea of his other work, but the opposition on nationality grounds stirred the old Adam within him, and provoked him to an instant decision, recalling, as he justly remarks, the number of Manxmen holding appointments in England. Haven't we to-day 'Wales for the Welsh,' 'Scotland for the Scotch,' 'Ireland for the Irish.' But the obvious, 'England for the English' would no doubt be regarded as a monstrous proposition, and create a widespread panic on 'the fringes.'

The new Vicar-General gradually abolished some of the belated customs, such as doing penance in a white sheet in the chancel, and swearing to debts over the grave of the deceased debtor. The cases of bibulous incumbents, of which there seem to have been many, were also tried in his court. Periodical dinners in connection with it were given alternately by the Vicar-General and the Bar, in which 'all was brotherly love, and sharp practice forgotten.' By far the most sensational incident in my grandfather's five years of office occurred in 1832, while holding a Consistory Court in the Sessions House at Kirkmichael.

Now there was a dissolute ruffian of gigantic proportions, named Robert Cannon, commonly known as 'Big Bob,' who held the whole district, including the police, in terror. He was utilised on this occasion by some ardent champion of the 'Man for Manxmen' party as an instrument for annoying the English Vicar-General, who, at the Session in question, and knowing nothing of this local swashbuckler,

was moved to indignation by seeing him walk into Court, and jauntily take his seat immediately under the Bench, with his hat on. My grandfather's sharp injunctions to remove it were met by a scoffing laugh. The policemen in Court were then ordered to attend to the matter, but none of them moved, while the Registrar came over, and in an awestruck whisper asked the Vicar-General if he was aware who the man was. The reply was in the negative, coupled with the further remark that such knowledge was quite irrelevant, after which a second demand for his removal was addressed to the constables. None, however, stirred, and the position was awkward. 'If this is the Isle of *Man*, and not of *Woman*,' said the undaunted Vicar-General, who, though of barely middle height, was extraordinarily active, 'this ruffian must be taught a lesson.' He thereupon ('improperly,' as he naïvely admits) threw off his gown, descended from the Bench, and seized the giant by the collar.

And then ensued 'a fearful struggle, in which I should very soon have been worsted if Mr. Corlett of Ramsey, and five or six others, had not rushed to my assistance and joined in the fray.' With tremendous uproar and overturning of benches, they succeeded between them in dragging the offender out of Court. Outside in the road, he shook them off, and 'I shall never forget,' says my grandfather in his notes on the incident, 'the magnificent appearance of that Manx giant, as he stood up in the middle of the road defying us, with his fine head, broad chest, and Herculean arms.' The Vicar-General then returned to the Bench, threatened the police with presentment to the Governor for their cowardice, and resumed proceedings. Presently, however, the landlord of the adjoining inn where the lawyers lunched came hurrying in with the news that the giant was seated on the table

with a round of beef between his knees, brandishing a carving-knife, and swearing that the lawyers should go home that day without their dinner. The landlord further prayed that the Vicar-General would lend him his coachman, William Christian (the strongest man there available). Even then strategy was necessary. Half a dozen men were placed in readiness, and Christian advanced into the room as if in friendly fashion to shake hands with the delinquent. As the latter put down the knife to return his greeting, the coachman fell upon him. The others then rushed in, and after a long rough-and-tumble on the floor, the handcuffs were adjusted, and the offender carried off to prison.

When set free later on, anonymous letters reached the Vicar-General that Big Bob had sworn to take his life. One night he actually lay in wait for him with a gun on the road he was to traverse between his home and the adjacent town of Douglas. But a humble friend and self-constituted detective had tracked the ruffian, and was just in time to warn his intended victim. Cannon was then arrested again, and the evidence was enough to throw him back into prison. But the Vicar-General's enthusiasm on behalf of an errant sheep extended as much to his enemies as to his friends, and this, I think, brought them together in more pacific fashion, and healed the breach so far as they two were concerned. But not apparently in many other cases. Forty-six years afterwards my grandfather was standing near Castle Rushell, going over the story of the scene in Court to some young relatives, when two old men near by, catching the gist of his remarks, came forward and asked if he had ever heard the end of Big Bob. On getting a negative, they related how he was found head down and heels up in the mud off Ramsay Harbour, and that he had so many enemies it was generally believed that while in his cups he had been flung off the quay by some of them at high tide.

In 1832 the Vicar-General became Archdeacon of the island. Later on, when the bishopric again fell vacant, he was sounded from headquarters as to his willingness to accept it if offered him. He negatived this at once on account of his wife's health, lack of good doctors, and still more of education and other advantages for a large and growing family, though he helped to start King William's College, the scene of Farrar's once famous book, *Eric*, and sent two sons there for a time.

Wreckers were still troublesome on the island, and a general insobriety was much aggravated by a vile Spanish spirit smuggled in, duty free, a very little of which maddened its imbibers. Sheep-stealing, too, was prevalent, since the death penalty made people unwilling to prosecute. This was altered to whipping at the cart's tail and imprisonment, the first victim of the new law being a woman! A malignant fever, due, in the Archdeacon's opinion, to an inordinate upcast of seaweed, devastated Douglas and the surrounding coast, bringing death into almost every house except his own, though his whole family were down with it.

Among other enterprises at this time, he paid a visit to the Curwens of Workington, stopping at their island place on Windermere, and preaching at Ambleside, where Wordsworth came into the vestry and took him up to Rydal Mount. He also visited De Quincey, and has something to say on the fatal decanter, and also Southey at Keswick, whom he tackled on theology, and has left an entertaining account of the interview to any one who can read between the lines. He transported most of his family and entourage to Suffolk on a few weeks' visit, posting in his own carriage, with an extra hired one, this prodigious distance. He nearly caused the death of Bishop Ward's successor, Boustead, whom he greatly admired, by galloping him

over a common where his lordship's horse, from the Archdeacon's stable, put his foot in a rabbit-hole, and landed the prelate on his head. When he came to, after a brief period of unconsciousness, the Bishop resisted my grandfather's attempt to bleed him, but the latter, accustomed to have his way, in this as in many other matters in the island, eventually got his knife in. No practitioner, professional or amateur, in those days could conscientiously feel that they had done their duty till blood was let.

Just before Dr. Boustead's appointment, a scheme for annexing the diocese to Carlisle was put forward, and strongly resisted in the island. The Archdeacon was summoned to London to give evidence before a committee of the House of Lords, which he gave with his usual candour, against the proposal. Even in the august presence of the Lords' Committee, with a very famous person in the chair, the Archdeacon slipped in his 'word in season,' or its equivalent, illustrating the delightful touch of simplicity which distinguished him till his dying day. There was a scandal current just then touching the aforesaid famous personage and a well-known lady, and while giving evidence on the moral condition of the island, and touching on its lapse from virtue in matters conjugal, he 'fixed his eye sternly on the noble chairman,' and no doubt felt happy in having done his duty.

The Minister, however, obviously overlooked my grandsire's arraigning eye, for it so happened that it devolved upon him later on to facilitate an exchange the Archdeacon was anxious to effect. For in 1838 he once more moved his household, now including eleven children, across England to East Anglia, where, in the delightful and roomy rectory of Great Cressingham, in Norfolk, his large family, to be yet further augmented, found ample scope indoors and out

to grow and flourish in unbroken happiness. It was not without misgivings, though creditable enough to his common sense, that so stout an Evangelical began to send all his sons, one after another, to the Rugby of Arnold's day. The second died when high in the sixth, and full of promise, a tablet in the school chapel, though now dim and hard to read, and with no significance for present generations, recalls his name and virtues. The eldest, a contemporary of Tom Hughes, and all that set, had then already gone up to Trinity, Cambridge. It may be mentioned as a mere coincidence that of his six sons-in-law five of them were quite fortuitously Rugbeians, only one, my father, coming into his family through the natural channel of a school friendship. Bishop Boustead had taken over his Archdeacon's effects, 'furniture, carriages, horses, and wines.' So his exit was much facilitated, and there is ample documentary evidence to prove it was generally regretted. An untoward incident, though with no serious result, occurred in the long road journey to Norfolk, memorable enough in domestic tradition. For, coming out of the George Hotel at Northampton, the chief and foremost of the two or three vehicles that comprised this procession across England took the curbstone and tipped over, depositing a considerable proportion of the family and baggage in the dust, outside All Saints' Church.

Only half of the Archdeacon's long life was now spent when what may be called his adventures terminated. He was active enough for the rest of his days, but in more humdrum fashion; conspicuously fond of the pulpit, after the old-fashioned way, and always happy in filling those of his many clerical friends in London of his own views, who constantly invited him to do so.

Seldom, however, was there a more genial and lovable man who held by that sombre school. That he was adored

by his numerous children and grandchildren from their infancy to their adolescence, as well as by his sons and daughters-in-law, is a rare tribute to a patriarch who expected a text all round, and no shirking after breakfast. As a matter of fact, his views mellowed immensely with old age, and with the outside influence of the large connection made through the marriages of his many sons and daughters. He was my idea of a thorough-going East Anglian, though he saw a good deal of the outside world in his time. The wild and bold scenery of the Isle of Man is alluded to with approval, to be sure. The Welsh border where, for his wife's health, he lived happily for many years, didn't, I think, greatly touch him. He loved rather to talk of fens and canals, of snipe and wild-fowl, of reclaiming marshes, and of the trees that would grow in them. He, moreover, knew the East Anglian dialect well. He loved Holland too, with its dykes and flood-gates, and was constantly going over there to his lifelong friend, Baron Hooft, while the draining of Haarlem Mere was a never-failing subject of interest to him. One of his last little jokes in old age was to bring some pheasants from there in September, the shooting in Holland opening a week or two earlier than with us, and to carry them ostentatiously through England, enjoying the amazement and disgust with which he was regarded by all and sundry, and hoping a policeman would tap him on the shoulder. He had children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren all over the world. He knew what each was doing, kept himself posted in their news and their letters, and had thus an amazing store of odds and ends of information from almost every known country.

His eldest son, the Vicar of Berstead, *i.e.* Bognor Old Church, one of the most lovable of men, scholarly and whimsical, with a pretty turn for epigrams and verse, grave

and gay, wrote to him every single day of his later life, and often in this playful style. His unexpected death about two years before that of his father, in all likelihood prevented the latter from passing the century. I fancy this epistolatory filial devotion would be hard to match! Here is a specimen I find in his papers, written on the old gentleman's ninetieth birthday. It relates obviously to some instance of confusion between them, though the son, it should be added, was singularly fresh and handsome for his years:

'So lightly do you wear your years,
You cause a sad confusion:
For you and I, it oft appears,
Are topics of delusion.
"Pray, how's your boy?" folks not a few
Will stop me to inquire;
While just as many ask of you,
"How goes it with your sire?"
Nor, till they peer with closer eyes,
Break into smiles—or else—apologise!'

Here is another replying to a query from his father concerning the competency of a new schoolmaster at Berstead, the size of whose head had amused them both:

'A schoolmaster there was, a man of note,
Of whom, with fond regard, the poet wrote:
"The wonder was, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew!"

'Methinks had Goldsmith known this village school,
He would have said of him that here bears rule:
"The wonder is, and waxeth every minute,
A head so big hath got so little in it!"'

My grandfather died at Surbiton in his ninety-ninth year. His friend and neighbour, Archdeacon Burney (in his own church), and his son-in-law, the Dean of Westminster, to-

gether with the present Bishop of Sodor and Man, read the first half of the funeral service before a large congregation, prior to the departure of the coffin for its interment at Lydney, in Gloucestershire, where his wife had been buried. The death of so aged a person, for half a dozen reasons, is not often a cause of poignant sorrow. But I am sure that most of us there present felt very much as if a friend in his prime had been suddenly snatched away, to which was added the difficulty of imagining a world without 'the Venerable,' as he was always called by some of us. Indeed, he had been venerable, as it seemed, for all time, to practically the whole of the mourners. It is said by those who spent their lives with him that he had not an enemy in the world. For a man of strong convictions, who never flinched from firmly, if courteously, expressing them, no further eulogy seems necessary, for none could be more significant.

CHAPTER II

DEAN BRADLEY AT RUGBY AS BOY AND MASTER

In the last chapter I felt that a preliminary word of explanation was called for in introducing the two personages it treated of—both the man of once widely-known name, whose memory mere time has obscured, and the other, who, for different reasons, which I trust have been made obvious, seems worthy of remembrance. There is happily no cause for any similar preamble to such notes and recollections of my father, the late Dean of Westminster, in his earlier days, as may seem suitable to these pages, not merely because there are thousands of people still living who knew him in a public or private capacity, but for the simple reason that for the last forty years of his life, and in three distinct spheres of action, he was among the prominent men of his day.

Now at Clapham, that centre of material well-being and Evangelical orthodoxy, where, as previously stated, my father's father settled as incumbent of St. James about 1828, and remained for twenty odd years, there existed a quite admirable school. One need not be old to remember Dr. Pritchard as Professor of Astronomy at Oxford, or in his pleasant country house in the Isle of Wight, while his biography tells us all about what was styled Clapham Grammar School, but was in fact a new institution founded, I think, by a company for the higher education of the local well-to-do. Public schools, one need hardly say, attracted in the thirties of the last century but a fraction of what

might be called those eligible for them. The small number of schools of national repute, their comparatively limited accommodation, the dubious attitude of much of even the well-to-do public towards their advantages, and yet more perhaps the difficulties of travel, made the outlook of the average parent altogether different from that of his successor to-day. Dr. Pritchard, however, an eager educationalist, and though a mathematician in the first place, yet an admirable classical scholar and inspiring teacher, was placed in charge of the Clapham School, and gave it considerable reputation.

My father, who, together with some of his brothers, went there as a day boy, always deemed himself fortunate to have had the benefit of Pritchard's grounding, which enabled him when he entered Rugby at fifteen to take a high form at once, and get the best of the place the whole time he was there. And this was approximately the period preceding the premature close of Arnold's life, while in the very zenith of his fame. Notoriously devoted to their school as were the Arnold Rugbeians, particularly those who had come immediately under the great man, or otherwise occupied prominent positions, I am quite sure that none of them were fonder, and more especially in the later stages of his life, of recalling their school-days than my father, though in his case these reminiscences were in a great measure reserved for his own fireside. Moreover, the circumstances, of his career and situation facilitated the retention of old school friendships more or less throughout life, and the figures of some of these old heroes became as familiar to us as their names: Tom Hughes, for instance, and Seton-Karr (the last to pass away), the Arnolds, Franklin Lushington, Henry Hall Dixon (the Druid), Henry Ffolkes of Hillington, Archdeacon Nevill of Norfolk, Septimus Hansard of Bethnal Green, Hodson of Hodson's horse, Sir Richard

Temple, and many others. The after career of some of them who became conspicuous, in relation to their character and temperament at Rugby, was often a matter of interesting comment. As among the two or three head boys of the sixth, taking a normal part in other games, but notable as a cross-country runner, added to a considerable capacity for friendship, my father was probably as good an authority as could be found for the Rugby of that distinguished period, and I should imagine a thoroughly representative type of its more intellectual side.

It has often been regretted that with such a vivid memory of that epoch, and such an affection for it, he should have left practically no account of it in writing. But he would himself have been the first to admit that (with reservations) *Tom Brown's School Days* was more than adequate. The reservations always insisted upon by my father were that simply as a picture of the Rugby of that day it failed to touch the more intellectual side of the school's life. This was, of course, not meant as a criticism. Mr. Hughes, in all probability, could not have done it. Moreover, the immortal book didn't profess to be history, but a story for boys, and it achieved a fame which astonished the author as much as the authorship, when they knew it, surprised his Rugby contemporaries. For they all accepted it, even to the hypercritical and purely intellectual Dean Stanley, as an admirable picture of the Rugby they knew from what may be called the average healthy-minded boys' standpoint. All Mr. Hughes intended was to write, from that point of view, a good boys' book, and he succeeded so completely that he has never since had a rival. Though almost contemporaries in age, Mr. Hughes being in a different house, and though a leader in games, not then, I think, in the sixth, he and my father had been merely school acquaintances. In after life, however, they became great

friends, and Mr. Hughes sent his son to Marlborough. At the main exit of the school, after the morning's work on a half-holiday, my father and his friends used to stand at one side, shouting, 'Hare and Hounds,' while the opposition, with Tom Hughes prominent among them, shouting, 'Football,' stood on the other, as they beat up their respective forces. Compulsory games, as now understood, save for the varied obligations of fags, were not then dreamed of; the poacher and the adventurer went their ways in peace. A generation previously, in Walter Savage Landor's time, a conspicuous obligation of the Rugby fag was to carry his master's casting net to the Avon, or run down before first school to examine his night lines.

The authorship of *Tom Brown*, as a literary achievement, astonished both friends and contemporaries. Yet those of a younger generation who were privileged to know Mr. Hughes in his prime, as the entertainer of boys, must always remember this fine, upstanding, cheery, wholesome-looking man, as a complete personification of his hero grown to middle age. I can see him now with his equally benevolent and boy-loving lady walking up the old High Street at Marlborough, followed by a group of hungry youngsters, already sniffing the cakes and ale that awaited them at the Ailesbury Arms. According to my father and his Rugby friends, including Mr. Hughes himself, who should have known, the author of *Tom Brown* created his heroes simply as types, as would any sensible man, and no boy in the book represents an actual character. The temptation to go one better than the author, and to pose among their own connection as the original of these fictitious heroes, has apparently been irresistible among many middle-aged and elderly gentlemen. In many cases such harmless vanity was more than supported by the young generation allied to them. Within my own experience at least a dozen Easts

and several Slogger Williams have been positively sworn to by sons, nephews, or neighbours. The most humorous hallucination of all, however, and a quite widely scattered one, which even survived the Dean himself, had it that Arthur was a pen portrait of Stanley, who was actually a fellow and tutor of his college at Oxford, and not a Rugby boy at all in Hughes's time !

Henry Hall Dixon was another of my father's school friends, and an altogether remarkable character. As 'The Druid' he was, of course, conspicuous in after life as the most distinguished sporting writer of his day, and is still quoted, by the more inspired journalists of that faith, to readers for whom his name has probably no meaning. Dixon was a six-foot Cumbrian, and the son of a prominent Carlisle manufacturer, who came at the rather late age of sixteen to Bonamy Price's house, which was also my father's. He was a fair scholar, though cruelly handicapped by ophthalmic trouble, with a strong poetic temperament, and love for the Greek and Latin poets. So much would be not worth the telling. But he combined extraordinary athletic powers with what seemed to boys an eccentric objection to participate in any of the cross-country runs which in winter quite rivalled football. Worried with importunities, he leaped a five-foot-six gate on the Barby Road, nearly opposite Price's house, and undertook to join in every run if any one would follow him. Mr. Lawley,[1] who, as before related, was at Rugby with him and wrote his life, also mentions this incident. The gate, he says, remained *in situ* for forty years, and known by his name, but was never jumped. Dr. Arnold himself has left in writing the high esteem in which he held his character. But, after all, what made Dixon such a unique personality was his singular blend of these tastes with a passion for horseflesh, and an eye for it that in

[1] The Hon. Francis Lawley.

after years made his opinion of a racing stable held as second to none in England. Always a poor man, he never did any riding himself, but the necessary hacking about, and never put a shilling on a horse. Furthermore, he was a man of strong religious principles, 'The horsiest Christian I ever knew,' my father called him. 'A white-souled Galahad amid the snares and temptations by which racing is surrounded,' says Mr. Lawley, who was well qualified to appreciate the situation. At Rugby Dixon used to run to all the meets and steeplechases he could reach, while at Cambridge he had, of course, the great opportunities of Newmarket.

Silk and Scarlet, *Saddle and Sirloin*, *The Law of the Farm*, and other books were classics in their day, and his *nom de plume* of 'The Druid' in the sporting press was famous. In short, he was unique. He brought to racing, farming, and rural life the fire of a scholarly poetic man, with the knowledge of a practical one, and possessed a style that appealed to the cultivated reader, while it embodied sound truths appreciated by the trainer or the farmer. Dixon was a tremendous walker, and travelled thousands of miles on foot, between John o' Groats and the Land's End, in his visits to notable herds or flocks, to hunting or racing stables. I saw him once, as a boy, under truly characteristic circumstances. It was during the sixties, while my father, who had not met him for years, was at Marlborough, that he walked over the downs from Swindon (twelve miles), carrying a small portmanteau on his shoulder, and rang our bell, claiming a night's hospitality. His host was as delighted as amazed to see him, though his host's children, I well remember, were put to excruciating efforts to preserve their decorum on account of certain little eccentricities of this whimsical person, whose fame in his own way, and nobility of character we little realised. His object on that occasion was to take stock of Aleck Taylor's training stables at

Fyfield. And one may safely affirm that of the hundreds of guests, notable and otherwise, who in the last half-century have been entertained within those academic walls, no other ever came there on such an errand.

Dixon lifted the agricultural and sporting papers for which he wrote into a higher plane and a wider circulation, but never made more than £600 a year in his life, and Mr. Lawley says that the extraordinary physical efforts he often underwent in his travels, even to an occasional night under a hedge, were with a view to the better endowment of his wife and children. He finally broke his constitution by a winter ride from Caithness to Piccadilly, and died in 1870. A single sentence from a letter written in 1863 by a Rugbeian uncle of my own, then a parson in Sussex, to Mrs. Dixon, is a most felicitous tribute to her husband's personality.

'We had a delightful day at Hurstmonceaux. Your husband is the only man in England who can thoroughly appreciate in one afternoon the shape of a female thoroughbred, and the memory of a masculine divine, who can understand Julius Hare in his surplice and Hodge in his smock. I never knew any one who so completely and philosophically enjoyed the pleasures of the moment, and yet had a higher relish for the holy principles of the past and for those of Eternity. Nor do I think that there are many who can write a more musically balanced English sentence.' It is said that Mr. Lawley's monograph, *The Life and Times of the Druid*, was found soon after its publication in the hands of a mystified American tourist to Stonehenge!

My father used often to talk of Hodson of Hodson's Horse. His dashing and dramatic career in India, the pistolling of the Princes at Delhi, and the conflicting opinions regarding his character, gave a certain fascination to these

memories of his prominent boyhood at Rugby. My father and he were in the same house, as well as rivals for chief school honours in the long cross-country runs that were such a feature of Rugby life. To say that his great pluck and dash in India surprised his old friends is merely to state a fact. He had been a prominent, vigorous and athletic youth, but there had been certain reservations in the esteem in which his friends held him, that even in confidence long after he was dead and forgotten my father never explained. Whether it was merely that his spirit was not regarded as equal to his physical gifts, which made his after daring so surprising, or some other blemish, I do not know. Hodson's admiration for Arnold was boundless, and an illustration of it rather typical of the time may be given. My father being over fifteen when the London coach first set him down at Rugby, was comparatively sophisticated, and beyond the reach of the ordinary little new-boy tremors and methods of reception. Recognising him no doubt as an intelligent human being, and not mere food for shoe leather, Hodson burst into his study on the very first morning, and seizing his hand shook it with vigour, exclaiming, 'I congratulate you on coming here in time to be under the finest schoolmaster, and the finest man in England.'

The sporting element was in those days peculiarly strong at Rugby, fostered no doubt by its position in the midst of a great hunting and steeplechasing country, and by the further fact that a considerable proportion of the boys were the sons of midland or north-country squires, or well-to-do country parsons. Not content with running to meets and steeplechases, a boy in the schoolhouse, who much fancied himself, offered to ride any fellow in the school over 'four miles of fair hunting country,' and the challenge was taken up by Uvedale Corbett, afterwards a well-known Cheshire squire. They secured horses from innkeepers in the town, and

the course selected and ridden was 'from Bilton Church to Newbold steeple.' In the presence of a select circle the challenger was handsomely beaten, but took his defeat ungraciously, and put it down to the horse. Corbett then offered to change horses and ride the race again after dinner. The news of this got wind in the school, and a large company gathered at Bilton for the second event, in general sympathy with Corbett, the challenger being not only something of a braggart, but also something of a bully. Among the obstacles were two flights of stiff post and rails, enclosing the new Birmingham and London railroad, then in the course of construction. Corbett's superior judgment landed him again a winner, though both horsemen jumped the fence into the last field at Newbold together.

To the surprise of all concerned, there was no row after this rather audacious proceeding, and the sporting fraternity took great heart and made preparations for another race on a considerable scale. There were many entries ; horses were hired in Dunchurch, and the over-sanguine competitors, with their friends, were walking over the proposed course, the day before the fixture, when Dr. Arnold was seen strolling casually by. Nothing was said at the moment, for no rules were being broken, but the Doctor sent for Corbett that evening, and told him he knew all about the former race, but overlooked the misdemeanour as he would have been forced to expel him, and so injure his prospects at Oxford, whither he was shortly proceeding. He knew exactly what was in the wind now, however, and should expel everybody who rode, and every boy who looked on. This, of course, settled the matter. My father, being only a new boy at the time, and not present, his recollection of the incident was merely that of its occurrence as a great sensation. The details I owe to Mr. Francis Lawley. There seems to have been no disapproval of the boys going to

sporting events in the neighbourhood. On one occasion, when a Grand National Steeplechase meeting was held at Dunchurch, Arnold did away with 'calling over' to enable the school to see it. A *vulgus* was set in the fifth form on the subject, and here is a fragment of the poetic fire it kindled: 'Lottery primus erat Nana (the Nun) secunda fuit.'

In the days of Wooll, Arnold's predecessor, shooting, mostly, of course, poaching, had been a popular method of spending a half-holiday, guns and dogs being kept in the back-yards of tradesmen with whom the boys dealt. Public houses do not seem to have been taboo even in Arnold's day, as they became later on at the public schools. Possibly because most boys drank beer as they drink water now, both at home and at school. In the cross-country runs such places of refreshment played an ordinary part as points of rendezvous, and were not associated with law-breaking. My father, who, for constitutional reasons, was abstemious to a degree all his life, used laughingly to recall his passing indignation with Matthew Arnold (his own contemporary), who, on the first occasion on which he was invited to dine with the doctor (a notable event, of course), rallied him loudly on his small appetite, jocosely attributing it to the good quality of the ale at the B—— Arms, where they finished some run in the afternoon. I mention this trifle merely as a sign of the times, and also because Dr. Arnold is sometimes portrayed as a kind of sanctified prig by the historians of schools, which the Rugby of that day cast somewhat into the shade.

The late Sir Richard Temple, of Indian fame, and dear to the pencil of *Punch* caricaturists in later years, was my father's fag. The first occasion on which I encountered him was of almost too melancholy a nature to stir the reminiscent note. It was at Commemoration at Oxford in 1882, I

think, just after his return from India. Sir Richard, with other notables, had been given the usual honorary degrees, and by some deplorable mischance he had been overlooked after the ceremony by the semi-official luncheon givers, and Sir Richard, like most great Indian administrators, did not like to be overlooked. We found him wandering about in Carfax alone, neglected, and disconsolate in his new scarlet doctor's gown, which gave him a rather diverting appearance, howsoever lugubrious his air. My host and relative, who knew him slightly, brought him back to a domestic lunch in Holywell Street, which saved the situation from a material point of view, but not, I fear, from that of wounded dignity.

I think it was during his first Oxford Long Vacation that my father went up to stay with the Arnolds at Foxhow. When he arrived, the family had not returned from some expedition, and while waiting in the drawing-room an elderly rugged-looking man of florid face and plain attire walked through the French window, and asked if the Doctor was about. My father took him for a well-to-do farmer, and in reporting the incident to the Arnolds, was amazed, and as an enthusiastic Wordsworthian, duly exalted to discover that it was the great man himself. He made, what he conceived to be, an appropriate remark to his old chief as to the pleasure the near neighbourhood of such a man must give him. Whereat, to his surprise, the Doctor, so far from taking this as a matter of course, gave a sigh almost approaching a groan, and intimated by word or action that the bard's séances were not altogether an unmixed delight. From what De Quincey and others have told us, Wordsworth was not a talker of the give-and-take description. At any rate, my father, always extremely accurate, was very precise as to this little scene. He told it me for the first time as we were walking up the drive at Foxhow in '82,

and as a lifelong Wordsworthian had just been spouting one of his favourite passages, which, to this day, I remember.

Rugby was surely then in great demand! In glancing at those pages of the register which coincide with my father's boyhood, it is noteworthy, though perhaps not remarkable, what a crowd of well-known families were there represented: Skipwiths, Corbetts, Elliots (of Minto), Mildmays, Ischams, Cholmondeleys, Watkin Wynns, Thurloes, Wrotteslys, Thornhills, Walronds, Evelyns (of Wotton), Stanleys (of Alderley), are but a few of those that catch the eye.

My father came out head of what, I think, was called 'the Long List,' otherwise the result of the examinations, in his last summer half, and in the October following went up to University College, Oxford, where he had won an open scholarship. Here he was under Dr. Plumptre, whom he was himself to succeed as master thirty years later, while Arthur Stanley, with whom he became so intimately associated for the rest of his life, was a young fellow and tutor. Some of his Rugby friendships were, of course, maintained, and many others made. A marked delicacy of health supplemented fortunately by a certain wiriness and nervous energy, which remained throughout his long life, seem to have set in at Oxford, a fact he used in part to attribute to over-running at Rugby. In after days, at Marlborough, this conviction, acquired by personal experience, that long-distance running was of dubious advantage to boys, prevented him from attempting to stimulate the very limited amount of it we there indulged in. His health was in such a precarious state before going in for Greats, that his very power to do so hung on a veritable thread, and it was in the teeth of physical suffering and debility that he went through the ordeal, and got his first in a small class. He was soon afterwards elected a Fellow of his college, and

in the meantime a godmother had left him a small legacy which he expended in a horse and its keep, the best investment, he used to declare, that he ever made in his life, seeing that in his opinion it saved it. However this may be, it stimulated a strong passion for riding, which he indulged continuously for some twenty-five years, to his great physical welfare.

Reading parties had filled most of the Long Vacations, and my father's reminiscences of these were many and interesting. For most of his companions were men who made their mark in after life, and the youthful idiosyncrasies which distinguished each and all displayed themselves, often with no little humour, in the course of such protracted intimacies in Wales, the Lakes, Cromer, or the Isle of Wight. Barmouth, though in those days an insignificant place at the far end of a seventy-mile coach drive, had been already discovered by Oxonians. To this day reminiscent old natives can point to a building known for long by tradition as the 'Collegians' House,' standing back above the river mouth, and commanding the loveliest prospect perhaps in Britain. My father was there one Long Vacation with, I think, Septimus Hansard, Henry Ffolkes, Charles Buxton, and two or three others, including W. B. Philpot, his future brother-in-law, and about the best high jumper of his particular day at Rugby. Long-distance running had obviously not been abandoned by all Rugbeians with their schooldays. It would seem to the modern a surprising preparation for some hours of hard reading to run four miles out and back along the Dolgelly Road after an early breakfast, but this is what my father and his friends used to do. The non-Rugby detachment, presumably uninspired by memories of 'Big-side runs,' chose the easier part, and lay in bed till a later breakfast. My uncle, whose procedure would be better appreciated by those who knew that fascin-

ating person and his delightful leisureliness in after life, got up like a true Rugbeian to the early breakfast full of good intentions. But as a tremendous trencherman he was seldom able to tear himself from his eggs and bacon in time to join the others, whose futile gibes were turned to indignation when, in an hour or two, they returned to find him still at ease with pipe, pencil, and paper, throwing off caricatures and metrical skits in which they generally themselves figured. The crowning offence, however, came when he proceeded to sit down, with his handsome smiling face, and utterly impervious to all raillery, to a second substantial breakfast with the lie-abeds, and go through it with all the vigour of a first performance.

Cromer was another favourite resort for these parties, as several of the connection were Norfolk men. Indeed, I don't think many people from outside that county would have been found there in those dim days. Hither, too, from Cressingham came the Archdeacon of our last chapter, with his numerous company of young folks, while the Buxton clan were long before this settled in some strength around Cromer; Sir Fowell at Northrepps, then representing its head, and comparatively fresh from his truimphant alliance with Wilberforce in the struggle for West Indian emancipation. The Cromer of the forties was a familiar enough retrospective picture in our household for obvious, and other reasons. Everybody, of course, knew everybody, and their collective young mounted on donkeys appear to have swept the then quiet sands in formidable squadrons. My father first met the Archdeacon's fourth daughter in these Cromer gatherings as a young girl, and three or four years afterwards, at eighteen, she became his wife. In the meantime he had been offered and accepted a mastership at his old school by Dr. Tait, later on Archbishop of Canterbury, and had already entered into possession of one of the

boarding-houses, that pleasant one still standing at the end of the Hillmorton Road, almost facing the schoolhouse and the entry to the close.

The school continued to flourish greatly under Tait, numbering, I think, between four and five hundred. Even when Dr. Goulburn came, admirable gentleman and Christian, but inadequate schoolmaster, and let it down somewhat, my father's house continued full. At this time of day there is no harm in saying that some of the old stagers still retained the strictly commercial point of view in which boarding-houses originated, and that the catering was quite inadequate. My father and others of his type, no doubt unacquainted with such subtleties, encountered no little reproach from these old-timers on account of their more lavish provision. He took a high form, was successful both as a teacher, private tutor, and housemaster, and was entirely happy, though never very strong in health, for his whole twelve years at Rugby. I have myself many vivid recollections of Rugby in the fifties, and those of childhood assuredly stand by us with extraordinary clarity.

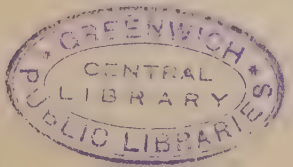
The Crimean War burst on the country at the first opening of my eyes to the reception of permanent impressions, and absolutely the earliest of mine was connected with it. This was a strange figure in resplendent uniform, with bushy whiskers, seated at our dining-room table, and was accounted for by the fact of a portion of the 13th Hussars being on the march from Birmingham to Portsmouth *en route* for the Crimea. The vision was a captain of one of the troops, who, as a relative of my mother, had naturally looked in. This earliest blink of life is not without interest, as in six months this rather junior captain had brought out, to quote his own words, which have been quoted in print by others, for a certain felicity of expression, ' the wretched remnant ' of the regiment from the Light Cavalry Charge of Bala-

clava, to find himself left temporarily in command, and almost immediately a C.B. Since beginning this chapter a two-volumed history of this distinguished regiment has come out. Turning up its records I find that it was on 10th April 1854, that Captain Jenyns, with troop B, arrived at Rugby. This was thirteen days after the British declaration of war, and the very day of Russia's declaration. Among the many illustrations is a photograph of the survivors of the charge taken apparently the next day, and the young officer in question, doubtless as the senior survivor of them, is standing in front with the biggest whiskers of the group. He was, I think, the only one of his regiment to get a C.B., and as a matter of fact was an important witness, much quoted in the controversies, as well as in the subsequent investigation anent Lord Cardigan and Nolan. However, he became well known in the service as a distinguished and dashing cavalry officer, commanded his regiment in the sixties, and died rather prematurely as Assistant-Adjutant-General in 1873.[1]

Another figure that gorgeous raiment no doubt has helped to fix on the retina was that of the late Mr. Seton-Karr, who died only the other day. As a young man on leave from India, he used to hunt regularly from Rugby, and as an old school friend of my father was, of course, much in and out, while his scarlet coat on hunting-days made one of the earliest impressions. My father used to have a look at the hounds when his rather rare opportunities allowed. He had a big bay horse then, called the 'Emperor,' whose demonstrations, on encountering street music, were of such a nature as to lay him under suspicion of having served some apprenticeship in a circus.

Every one in Scotland not very long ago knew Principal Shairp of St. Andrews, who had, among other things, held

[1] Colonel Soame Jenyns.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the chair of poetry at Oxford during the eighties. He came as a young master to Rugby about this time, and as a wholly novel and original type delighted the more discriminating among his colleagues, and astonished the average boy. The son of a West Lothian laird, and educated at Edinburgh Academy, he had only his four years at Balliol by way of an English experience. This delightful and gifted person, trustful, enthusiastic, and poetic, had only sampled the English schoolboy by the few brilliant youths from Rugby or Eton who had taken him to their arms at Oxford, and Shairp was not a match for the average public schoolboy. My father, who became his lifelong friend, used to say that the cricketers probably thought he was mad. Remembering this, I casually asked a friend of mine the other day, a famous Rugby cricketer of that period, if he remembered Shairp. 'Mad as a hatter,' he rapped out at once. But this unqualified verdict was only earned apparently from a tendency to quote Wordsworth at length, to lower forms, by a certain unconventionality much appreciated by his equals, and by a perfect guilelessness in the matter of schoolboy tactics. However, all his friends agree that on first coming he was given to sauntering unconsciously through a Big-side football match immersed in a book, with his college cap tilted at the back of his head. And in those days public school masters were supposed to be dignified and well dressed in public. They did not slouch about in Norfolk jackets and flannel collars, with pipes in their mouths. Shairp, however, though he was twelve years at Rugby, never, it is said, achieved an understanding of the Philistines, though dear to the elect. He was big and manly in frame, was generally accompanied by a large Scotch deerhound, which I remember very distinctly, and took a day's hunting, as he had done at Oxford, whenever possible, and though a poet to his finger-tips, rode, I

believe, very straight, which was natural enough in his father's son. His colleagues and abler pupils loved him. The *perfervidum ingenium Scotorum* was never surely more attractively exhibited to appreciative aliens. His country, its history, literature, scenery, and poetry, was a passion. Professor Knight has summed up this side of Shairp's character by the quite sufficient statement that he loved his country exactly as Scott loved it. Among my father's other colleagues at Rugby were Archbishop Benson whom I remember vividly as a young man, J. B. Mayor, Theodore Walrond, Bishop Cotton, and some others, who rose to after distinction. If Dr. Goulburn, afterwards Dean of Norwich, who came between Tait and Temple, was not a success as a headmaster, every one liked and respected him as a Christian and a gentleman. But the children of the little coterie at Rugby adored him. He entertained them on their own account, and I can recall him perfectly on his hands and knees, with a half-dozen of us urchins on his broad back, playing the part of the elephant at the Zoo upon the schoolhouse lawn.

My father bought a small farm soon after he went to Rugby, about a mile out of the town on the Dunchurch Road, and he and my mother, more particularly, I think, the latter, who had some aptitude for this and kindred things, farmed it themselves, through the medium of a bailiff, who, I have no doubt, behaved as well as any bailiff could be expected to in such an alluring position. At any rate the dairy and other produce had a home market in their family of fifty and odd souls who, let us hope, appreciated the luxury. I do not suppose it paid economically, but it certainly did as a place of resort in leisure hours. My father, who was a featherweight, gave up big horses at this time, and he and my mother, who was also light, took to riding and driving ponies, a bunch of which, but half-broken,

he bought out of a gipsy's drove from the new forest. They and their successors gave endless diversion on the pastures of the farm, not merely to their owners, but to the horsy boys in the house, who, of course, asked for nothing better than to assist in such congenial proceedings. One of the most forward in this was the late James Tompkinson, M.P., whose tragic death in a point-to-point race in Cheshire a year or two ago, will be remembered. Another was John Hill of the famous Shropshire family, still active and prominent in his native county in all that concerns the welfare of horse-breeding and other rural things, and well known in the three kingdoms as a judge at the big shows. Mr. Hill's horsemanship while at Oxford, and his victory at a certain inter-university steeplechase, under difficult circumstances, are not even to this day omitted by any well-informed chronicler of this phase of Oxford life. Compulsory games in the modern sense were not yet thought of. Big-side and Little-side had such numerical support as would astound a modern accustomed to organised and strategic football with fifteen a side. It is interesting to remember Rugby Close, so long ago, even as seen with the eyes of a child already game-mad and fascinated by the football, then played like the cricket as in Tom Hughes' day on Old Big-side, the present ground being then in the making. Compulsion of a kind there certainly was. For long squads of dark-coated and, I think, top-hatted boys stood behind the goal-posts under the elms by the schoolhouse wall performing a practically useless function known as 'standing in goal,' obligatory, I believe, on fags, but a matter, I take it, of pure custom and ceremony. At any rate I can recall with that extraordinary clarity which belongs to one's earliest impressions, those grey November afternoons when in some big match the tide of battle had rolled up towards the schoolhouse goal, by the main entry to the close, which

was then, I fancy, the sole vantage-point for such women and children as found their way in. I can remember how, with straining eyes, I used to peer through the opening and shutting gaps in the row of fags, and catch precious glimpses of the striped jerseys, the bespattered white duck trousers (worn in the fifties), the gorgeous red, blue, and green velvet caps, with their silver braid and tassels, then worn in the fray, and in those days peculiar to Rugby alone. I can still see the steam rising above the dark-coated fringe, from those prodigious and prolonged scrummages, hear the thud of the drop-kicking of the backs, and catch sight anon of the ball rising to what then seemed dizzy heights against the yellow foliage of the elms, which fell in such untoward numbers in the great storm of 1889. And after all these same elms had scattered their golden showers little more than a dozen times since Tom Brown and his heroes had been playing in the sixth and school match upon this same arena; while seeing that day-boys appear to have frequently entered the school in those days at the ripe age of seven, I might even have gazed myself upon mature performers who had shivered in goal through one of those classic contests!

To my father's reputation as a Rugby master, the fact that he was selected virtually by Cotton himself to succeed him at Marlborough is more than sufficient testimony. But an interesting side-light is thrown upon it in Mr. Oscar Browning's *Memories of Sixty Years*, published in 1910. Writing of Cambridge in the fifties, the author says, 'At King's we were all Etonians, at Trinity the dominant force was Rugby. The spirit of Arnold still survived, but we were given to understand that the strongest influence in that school was Bradley, afterwards Dean of Westminster.'

CHAPTER III

DEAN BRADLEY AND MARLBOROUGH IN THE SIXTIES

One of my father's earlier colleagues at Rugby, E. L. Cotton, who, in 1866, was drowned in India while gathering wider fame as Bishop of Calcutta, had been appointed to Marlborough. He was regarded at that moment as the best master at Rugby, and incidentally is the only figure in *Tom Brown* that his contemporaries admit was actually drawn from life, namely that young master who, it will be remembered, gave Tom such excellent advice before going up to Oxford on the day of the Marylebone match. Marlborough had been founded in 1843, and after nine years of always strange but fluctuating fortunes, had now fallen upon evil times. It was a fortunate moment when the governors of that school and others concerned with education persuaded Cotton to step into the breach, for the breach was very wide. Marlborough, with one notable exception, was the first of what are generally known as the Victorian schools. A pretty wide acquaintance throughout England and overseas leaves me under a strong conviction that in general reputation it has never sacrificed the position it acquired by seniority.

Unlike its three principal successors, who, at their inception, naturally profited much by its experiences, Marlborough has had no set-backs of any kind for half a century. It has been continuously full, and always pressed by a demand for extended accommodation, which last has been

from time to time gradually conceded. The waiting-list has invariably run into the future years, the best and most conclusive test I take it, of the confidence of the public. It owes nothing to the patronage of royal or illustrious persons, or to any kind of advertisement. It is far removed from the depressing meshes of suburban London, inner or outer, or again from the overshadowing atmosphere of fashionable watering-places. From the importunate attentions of the too handy parent its situation has mercifully preserved it, though motors have in this respect disturbed to some extent its ancient and blessed calm. It is also well outside the newspaper reporter's range. When a boy at Marlborough sprains his ankle in a house match, he has not the slightest chance of finding himself set forth as a suffering hero in a leading London paper the next day, an item of news from another school I have actually lived to read in cold print! Think of this, ye ancient heroes of Rugby Close and the 'hacking-over days.' Despite this disadvantage, and quite obviously unconscious that it is such, and indeed with anti-advertising traditions perhaps too actively cherished, the school has retained the unbroken confidence of the public to a quite remarkable extent for at least half a century.

But its story for the first fifteen or twenty years was the very antithesis of all this, and when Cotton went there at the end of its first decade, its plight was as bad as bad could be. It had been founded by a group of earnest individuals, philanthropic in so far as they were not looking for anything but a low interest on their money for themselves or their supporters, and were full of zeal for their scheme, which was much needed and quite admirable. Unfortunately these worthy gentlemen knew next to nothing about schools or boys, and the technical side of their management. Arnold's régime at Rugby had restored

such measure of popularity as public schools had formerly enjoyed, which the modern may possibly need reminding bore no proportion to that which those much-multiplied institutions now enjoy in their various degrees from the rush of all well-to-do England to imprint their *cachet* on the rising generation.

But when Marlborough was founded Eton and Rugby alone were at the moment flourishing. Harrow had dropped to sixty-nine boys, and Vaughan, who soon pulled it up again, was seriously advised by one of its prominent Governors to get rid of the sixty-nine and start afresh! He was also remonstrated with by a university friend for 'throwing himself away on Harrow,' while Kennedy, when invited to stand, refused even the temptation of an income three times as large as that he enjoyed at Shrewsbury. Westminster had shrivelled to at least as small a number, and broken for ever, as it proved, with its ancient aristocratic associations. Winchester was then only so-so, and very rough. An early Marlburian once told me how his mother burst into tears when the news came that his brother had been elected on the Winchester Foundation, not for joy, or from a swelling heart at the financial relief to a full-quivered country parson's household, nor yet from maternal elation at a son's success, but from the terrors then associated with life at that ancient foundation. Both survived, like innumerable others, their elementary experiences at their respective schools, between which there was then in this particular mighty little to choose. The one rose to high distinction as a Wickhamist of Wickhamists, the other to as great a one in the nation's service. I do not know whether the old Charterhouse had then begun that steady shrinkage which had reduced it in my schooldays to a place of small consideration, and was to bring it a little later to the alterna-

tive, I believe, of extinction or migration. The only other school that enjoyed, or ever had enjoyed, anything approaching a national reputation, or on its merits attracted many boys from distant counties, was Shrewsbury through the successful teaching of Dr. Kennedy and his predecessor, Dr. Butler. Outside the scholarship imparted to the few who displayed a likelihood of benefitting thereby, it offered but slight attractions till it moved out of its cramped quarters in the old town. It was, in short, as Tonbridge, Sherborne, Blundells, Bury, and many others just an important grammar-school lifted above them by its fame for scholarship.

So, in 1843, it will be seen, there was abundant opening for another public school on rather different lines, and unhampered by the physical and other limitations inherited from former days and different conditions. There proved, as we now know, room for several. As to its future site the founders of Marlborough College had an open mind, and fortune in this particular at least wonderfully favoured them. That Marlborough is one of the most delightful and quaint of old English country towns was æsthetically something. But better still, the feudal demesne at its gates to which the borough had been more or less tributary since time began, was in keeping with the town, and it was this demesne that happily fell into the hands of the founders of the school. Now Marlborough Castle had been the property and the occasional residence of several successive kings and queens of England. When the Seymours of Wolfhall, in the near neighbourhood, rose to power by the marriage of their daughter with Henry VIII., it passed into their possession, and in due course they built a large mansion out of its materials. The Seymour property also included the noble forest of Savernake, which approaches near to the town, as well as another residence within it, since grown

into Tottenham House, the present seat of the Marquis of Ailesbury, their lineal representative.

The Seymours had acquired Savernake through marriage with the heiress of the Esturmys, who had been the king's rangers of the forest for centuries, and were represented by successive Lords Hertford. One of these, about the close of the seventeenth century, replaced the first mansion by the stately house, from plans, it is said, by Inigo Jones, which, after varying fortunes and by curious chances, became the nucleus of Marlborough College. Frances, Lady Hertford, with her husband, occupied it in the early eighteenth century, a patroness of poets, and herself not without poetic fires, but more effective as an ardent landscape gardener. James Thomson was a favourite guest, and in fact wrote his *Spring* at Marlborough. His preference, however, for Lord Hertford's convivial board to his patroness's boudoir brought about his dismissal, in spite of the well-known dedication to her ladyship, extolling her as equally fitted 'to shine in courts or walk the plain.' She planted groves that are now lofty rookeries. She laid out broad terraces and banks of sward that, mellowed by time, are still much as she made them. She set out yews that, quaintly trimmed, have for all memory been outstanding features of this fair old-world pleasaunce, and lime trees that now tower in stately rows or isolated clumps. The large bowling-green is intact. The ornamental waters alone have been filled up this century or more with fair stretches of greensward. Through the meads below the Kennet steals quietly down from the little Norman church of Preshute, where King John's children were baptised, while above springs up the smooth swell of the Down, with one of the five white horses of Wiltshire prancing on its face.

How the Marlborough property passed by inheritance to the Dukes of Northumberland, how, to the disgust of some

of the family, the stately Queen Anne house was allowed to become a coaching inn, and how, as such, it was regarded as the finest in England, tempting great folks to lie there over week-ends, and Macaulay to celebrate it in a rolling period, cannot be detailed here. Of this and all concerning it I have written elsewhere.[1] It is enough that when railways left the Bath Road desolate, and the Castle Inn, sympathetically dealt with in Mr. Stanley Weyman's admirable romance, practically derelict, the founders of Marlborough College snapped it up. Its landlords had been tender with its memories, and cherished it inside and out, which doubtless paid them. Its pannelled halls, its charming gardens built and laid out by Seymours, had suffered nothing. Among the many errors of other kinds its new occupants fell into, they at any rate recognised the æsthetic assets of such a place, and sedulously guarded them.

The boarding-house system, said these reformers, was a sordid business, which made hotel-keepers of masters at the expense of parents, and with no benefit to the school at large, which could feed its own pupils, so they considered, quite as well at far less cost, and make a profit for itself in addition. Excellent theory! But they forgot that the salaries without boarding-houses would have to be far higher to attract first-rate men, and they were not in a position to offer anything of this kind. Many new buildings were erected, unfortunately the reverse of artistic in design, though mercifully not in any way interfering with the old Seymour House and grounds; and on an August day in 1843, from the north, and from the south, from the east and from the west, particularly from the west, there arrived two hundred boys. In the confidence of being able under their scheme to give 'ninepence for fourpence,' to quote a current shibboleth, the terms were placed absurdly low, and

[1] *Round about Wiltshire.*

with a philanthropic eye on the clergy, their sons were given a further advantage. The class of boy was excellent: squires' sons, parsons' sons, officers' sons, or their equivalents. In the registers of the first few years hardly a well-known family in the five western counties is unrepresented. The first two hundred boys being all young behaved quite nicely. Then they grew bigger, and began to feel their strength. Soon afterwards two hundred more arrived, and before the end of the forties there were five hundred in the school, which found itself the largest in the kingdom, after Eton. That was nearly all, however, that could then be said for it.

Dr. Wilkinson, the first headmaster, was a good scholar and an admirable man, but he was not adapted to facing fearful odds. He was not a scholastic Napoleon, but a good old-fashioned grammar-school master, with no experience at all of bigger things. His dozen or two assistants were generally ill qualified to support a chief in facing fearful odds. They were, moreover, too few, and they were ill paid. It would be both impracticable and irrelevant to dwell here on these ten years. They are rather dramatic, no such experiment or anything like it ever having been attempted, but at the root of the whole business was continuous lack of funds. Even the idea of playing-fields had been overlooked. The whole countryside, however, became a playing-field and, of course, it was a grand one, in that sense, better than that of any other large school in England. Upon one side was Savernake Forest, upon the other illimitable downs. Hares and rabbits everywhere, as well as fat trout in the Kennet, offered irresistible opportunities to country-bred boys. Some aspired even to bigger quarry among the ample herds of forest deer. There are traditions, too, of surreptitious guns and dogs.

The boys became the terror of the countryside, and raced

the keepers for miles around off their legs. There were cricket and football of a casual light-hearted kind to be sure, and the nucleus of the expanded and elaborate athletic arenas of modern times, lying handy, as it did at the gates, was easily acquired. But the administration was something on the lines of an old-fashioned grammar-school, and here there were four or five hundred boarders! The birch whistled merrily, and boys went in droves to execution, while the more fitful canes of form masters resounded in the big schoolrooms. Pugilistic contests under the laws of the prize-ring between even the biggest boys were frequent. I have known well, and held frequent converse with, any number of persons who were at Marlborough in these Homeric days. Some recall them with enthusiasm, others as a black nightmare, which is only natural. The strong and lusty had a good time, the humble and weak doubtless an extremely bad one. Liberty was great, the country splendid and most alluring to the adventurous. The air, too, was exhilarating, if the living was Spartan, and the great fireplaces were monopolised in winter by those to whom their schooldays in the retrospect were doubtless the most pleasant.

The weak discipline, however, broke down in 1851-2. A series of outbreaks, stereotyped for all time in local history as ' The Rebellion,' brought matters to a head, and poor Dr. Wilkinson, the victim of untoward circumstances and his own lack of experience, retired in despair to the well-earned calm of a Wiltshire rectory. It is fortunate that the sage young Rugby master who, ten years before, had acted as beneficent counsellor to the apocryphal Tom Brown, consented to tackle Marlborough. No one living was probably so well fitted to do so, and the venture required courage, for, owing to financial reasons here irrelevant, failure would have meant speedy extinction.

The general public and the newspapers didn't concern themselves with schools as they do nowadays. Outside its clientèle most people were probably unaware of the existence of Marlborough. For some years it had satisfied its patrons' not very exacting demands, particularly as most of them were getting ninepence for fourpence, to the slow killing of the goose that provided it. But in time disquieting rumours got about which, growing slowly as they did in those days, developed by the early fifties into a bad reputation. The numbers fell off woefully, and numbers were the new school's life-blood, though never in its history did they sink below three hundred. Cotton, however, worked wonders. He fearlessly banished batches of the old soldiers in spite of the shrunken numbers. He brought the pick of his late Rugby pupils from Oxford and Cambridge as masters by his own magnetism and his confidence in the immense possibilities offered by this new school under the educational conditions of England in 1852.

I knew some of these masters, and for sufficient reasons intimately, to the very end of their lives. One was a near relative. Another was Mr. Edward Scott, who died quite recently at Rugby in a very vigorous old age, and loved nothing better than to talk of this 'band of missionaries,' as he called them, who went and worked with Cotton in the fifties. They overlooked the smallness of their salaries, which some could afford to do, while others couldn't, but did. At one critical moment most of them voluntarily returned their half-yearly cheques. The Marquis of Ailesbury, the landlord—for the property had not yet been purchased—always a good friend to the school, waived his rent. The terms, in the face of falling numbers, were raised, a move only a strong man would have dared at such a moment. Edward Scott, with his lifelong experience of public schools, used to say that those were the most interest-

ing six years of his life. There was a freshness and originality about the place which, with the excellence of the material and the keen interest of moulding a great public school out of what had looked like the wreck of an unwieldy grammar-school, was stimulating and delightful. And furthermore, there was always the irresistible charm of the place itself, with its quaint and ancient town, its noble forest, and its far-spreading downs. The contrast to the prosaic little midland town and the monotonous landscape around Rugby was a source of great consolation to men with souls and imaginations, both of which were indispensable to the task they had set themselves. Dr. Cotton felt the inspiration of this atmosphere to the full. To my father later on it was an immense compensation for the wrench from an assured position in the great school associated with most of his life, to the rule of a place even then little more than half-baked, and with its fortunes still hanging in the balance.

Marlborough, at any rate, was not involved by Charters in the education of the local burgesses, nor did grocers and corn chandlers sit on the governing body, a fact which weighed heavily on some grammar-schools aspiring to national reputations. Nevertheless, when Cotton came he was quite right in proclaiming to the assembled boys that Marlborough was not yet a public school, but that he intended to make it one, and that if he couldn't, he should resign. Strong and bold language at the moment! However, with the help of his devoted lieutenants he succeeded admirably. He instituted government through the sixth form, a feeble shadow hitherto, and regulated fagging. He brought to bear other influences than the cane and the birch. Games, facilities for which were now ample, were properly organised, and Rugby football duly introduced, the first instance of its expansion beyond Rugby Close. In time the numbers

began to mount again. The standard of work had been, I believe, quite respectable even in the troublous times, and the material very good, and Dr. Wilkinson no mean scholar. But Cotton brought it up to the average of the more prosperous older schools, while the increasing numbers going up to Oxford and Cambridge began to make the school better known.

The cricket eleven had hitherto been content to play against the neighbouring country clubs. Professionals were now engaged, famous men too, such as James Lillywhite, Carpenter, Addison—names redoubtable in their day and classic in cricket history—and the school in 1855 played their first annual match at Lords with Rugby, and a home-and-home match with Cheltenham, of which last just a word must be said in apology for an apparent omission.

Cheltenham was founded a year or two before Marlborough, and grew to be for a time even larger. In my boyhood it numbered over six hundred, and was easily the biggest public school after Eton. It even then possessed the fine smooth, ample cricket ground where the county matches are now played in vacation time. The town of Cheltenham, as now, possibly even more so, was a popular residential place, full of retired officers, Anglo-Indians, and the like. The college was founded mainly, I think, as a day-school for their abounding sons, and from the first devoted at least half its energies to modern subjects, and to supplying the British and Indian armies with officers. Quite early it expanded into boarding-houses, and, at any rate for its first forty years, no school in England, unless for obvious reasons Eton, was anything like so strongly represented in regimental life.

In 1858 Cotton was appointed Bishop of Calcutta, where he made a great mark, and at his recommendation my father was invited to succeed him at Marlborough. The

prospect otherwise was to his liking, but the still shaky finances of the school were calculated to give pause to a married man of delicate health, with a growing family, and in a secure position in every way congenial. But I do not think he hesitated at all. He had once or twice stayed with Cotton, and doubtless understood the situation. He went into residence in August 1858; for in those days Marlborough still stuck to the old-fashioned system of two half-years with only two vacations, as, I think, did Rugby. Most English schoolboys of those days would allude to next *half*, not to next *term*. If omens count for anything in first arrivals, the new headmaster's fortunes should have been wholly adverse. The incident had its humorous as well as its sinister and uncomfortable side. I remember it vividly, and was contemplating the spot only the other day. My father in this, his first entry upon office, was approaching Marlborough from the south, from the Isle of Wight in fact, where he had recently purchased a farm and built a residence in the parish of Freshwater. Railway communication was still imperfect. From other directions you could get to various stations within a dozen miles of Marlborough; but from this it seemed simpler to drive from Salisbury, much of the twenty-seven miles being over the Plain. A large omnibus having been chartered at the old *White Hart*, and loaded up inside and out with our very considerable household, and effectively horsed, we had travelled sedately for many miles through a grey threatening afternoon when, without a moment's warning, the catastrophe came. Why, in lurching down a chalk hill, the coachman beside whom I was perched drove us into the ditch, I do not know. My father always held to it that he was drunk, and told him so in the heat of the disaster, I remember, in unqualified terms.

The ditch was not deep, and the coach jammed at a reason-

able angle. None of the passengers were damaged, though I well remember a piercing shriek which rent the pitiless drizzling void of Salisbury Plain, for it had begun to rain. It was the cook, who had skinned her elbow, and was determined to become the heroine of the occasion. But the shock upon the apparently crazy vehicle almost parted the box portion from the body ; I can recall being caught in falling by the belt, and held there in mid-air by an agonised mother till the brief effort failed, and I descended upon the broad back of a white horse squatting supinely in the ditch, who seemed to mind it very little indeed. There was then a wet walk of two or three miles to Amesbury, a drying of bedraggled garments, and a laborious drive of fifteen more miles in such indifferent transport as that village could then supply. I can still see the lights of Marlborough glimmering in the vale below, as the old shoe-drag of our fly scraped down Granham Hill to the bridge over the Kennet. Such was my father's first entry to the school of which he was to become the second and chief founder.

At this time the salary of the Headmaster was, I think, barely half what it was raised to before my father left, and having regard to the incidental expenses of the position was, I fancy, less advantageous than the better Rugby masterships combined with a first-rate house. For the Marlborough Headship is wisely divorced from boarding-house worries and distractions, profitable though they may be. The Lodge, much enlarged in my father's day, is a delightful residence. Standing in its own grounds of several acres, fringed by the troutful Kennet, and abutting elsewhere upon the stately old-world charms of the Seymour domain attached to the college, no one ever lived there, old or young, who didn't love it, and hate to leave it.

But this didn't lighten my father's early labours and official anxieties. Dr. Cotton had only been in office six years ; enough to prepare the ground, but not to complete

the Herculean labours he had put his shoulder to. To the exacting eyes of a Rugbeian of the Arnold to Temple period, there was still an immense deal to be done. The freshness and possibilities of the place, however, seized my father's fancy at once, as it had done that of Cotton and his lieutenants, some of whom were still at their posts. The finances, though much improved, were nevertheless a very anxious matter. The property and all the improvements on it was held on a rather precarious lease, and the purchase of the freehold—a matter of some £30,000—seemed vital to security. In addition to this there was a very large debt. The school was not yet old enough to have a prosperous public of its own in the world among whom the hat could be circulated to any serious purport against such odds. Its founders and governors had behaved like Trojans, and had done all that men of moderate means could fairly do in furthering and backing their enterprise. They had long since recognised their limitations in matters of technical knowledge, and had given Cotton a free hand. They now transferred their absolute confidence to his successor. And that was something when one recalls the obstruction and the blunders of their trustees, and indeed the hampering charters of some even of the more prominent old foundations.

Still, a free hand could not coin money. It is enough that by the end of my father's twelve years, backed by an able and devoted staff, he had paid off the debt, purchased the freehold, and provided for the building of some large outside boarding-houses. He had taken orders just before coming to Marlborough, and the original chapel was an excellent one, though now replaced by one of the most beautiful buildings of its kind in England. The standard of services and choir-singing, as became a place with so large a clerical connection, had been always high, even in the gloomiest times, and the tradition was more than maintained.

My father found some admirable material in his sixth form, and utilised it to good purpose. The two Balliol scholarships then offered annually stood out in those days in a manner for which there is no modern equivalent as objects of scholastic emulation. My father's pupils won the first of these three years running, and one year captured them both. This was accompanied and followed by a long and continuous stream of university distinctions throughout the sixties, and mainly at Oxford, where it made a deep impression. Practically the whole upper sixth went up to college as scholars or exhibitioners. Again and again during the season of such competitions, on coming out of evening chapel, a prefect would announce the news of a fresh success, shouting out according to custom, 'Three cheers for So-and-so's scholarship at ——,' and then the cheering was taken up by four or five hundred scattered voices, carrying the sound through the night into every corner of the great two-acre court. The electric touch of the new Headmaster made history quickly at Marlborough. It was not only scholarship that flourished, but cricket and football too. In 1859 the eleven, Rugby being unavailable that year, met for the only time a far less formidable opponent in Charterhouse, and beating them very easily, made 300 at Lord's the next day against Marylebone—a quite remarkable score for a school against good professional bowling—on a strange, difficult wicket—in those old times. A year or two later they beat Rugby at Lord's for the first time, in one innings, and began that regular contribution to the university elevens which has gone on uninterruptedly ever since. In one of my father's later years, 1867, there were five Marlborough men playing together in the Oxford eleven.

He instituted (always excepting Cheltenham) the first public school 'Modern side,' which soon numbered over a hundred. About 1861, one year later, I think, than Eton, Harrow, and

Rugby, and simultaneously with Cheltenham, a rifle corps was formed and sent up a team for the Ashburton Shield.[1] One of the Founders of the school had lost heart quite early, and gone away to found Rossall, which did, and always has done, its work in the north, I believe, extremely well. At any rate it was very early in the field at Wimbledon, as the —th Lancashire, arrayed in a gorgeous scarlet uniform which, I am sure, all we other unenrolled corps, clad in sober greys, secretly envied. I have been occasionally amused of late years at the exuberant orations addressed to newly-founded cadet corps in various schools, as if they were heroic pioneers in a fresh field of enterprise; quite oblivious of the fact that half a century ago half a dozen schools were quite actively in the field. At Marlborough, being still on the half-yearly system, the Wimbledon team used to give up a week of the summer holidays, and return to school to practise. Having been one of them I may speak feelingly, and can testify moreover to the violence with which those old Enfield and Hay muzzle-loaders used to kick. There was no lying down in those days. We stood at two hundred yards, and knelt at the long ranges. Our marker, an elderly rustic, had been at Waterloo, and I am inclined to think that his experience there must have been of some service to him, considering the perilous conditions under which marking was done in those days. He rejoiced in a nose nearly twice as long as that of his celebrated commander, and wore a weather-beaten top hat which, upon one occasion —for he came out of cover to mark each shot—was perforated by a recruit's bullet. As an authority on the battle of Waterloo he was a failure; 'a sight o' smok'' being the utmost in the way of narrative that could ever be extracted from him.

[1] My father being himself very fond of rifle-shooting, took a particular interest in the rifle corps, and in its earlier years used to shoot a good deal at the range.

Among my father's earlier sixth form were the late Mr. Bosworth Smith, the well-known Harrow master and historian, Sir Courtenay Ilbert, F. de Paravicini, Thomas Leslie Papillon, W. H. Simcox, Alfred Robinson, and other household names in Oxford life. Among his old pupils too are Sir Charles Ollivant, K.C.I.E., the Bishop of Richmond, the Dean of Winchester and the Warden of Keble. A string of names, whose owners have risen to distinction, would be simple enough, but of no interest here. My father's career at Marlborough closed rather felicitously as a teacher with the two brilliant sons of the Bishop of Meath, J. G. Butcher (the present M.P. for York), and the but recently lamented Professor Butcher, M.P. for Cambridge University, the first scholars of repute that went from him to Cambridge, though Cotton and Wilkinson had sent a few.

My father was in sympathy and prepossession an Oxonian to, I think, a quite unusual extent. I do not mean aggressively so. On the contrary, I have more than once heard him say that Trinity was the first college in England.

But for a man so steeped in academic life, he knew wonderfully little of Cambridge. He was scarcely ever there in his life, and not at all till comparatively late in it, when he was on the Universities Commission. Perhaps in those days this attitude towards the sister university was not so uncommon at either of them. Among prominent men, I fancy, it would be now impossible. He had certainly no definite prejudice or feeling against the other university, and, of course, had many Cambridge friends, and I am sure could have defined to a nicety those marked but subtle shades which differentiate Oxford and Cambridge scholarship. His predecessor and Dean Farrar, his successor at Marlborough, moreover, were both Trinity Cambridge men. But, in a strictly passive sense, there is no doubt that my father was intensely Oxford, and certainly Marlborough for

the whole of his period was practically of one colour, though the fact of being a west country school counted perhaps for something. For the 'Small College' at Cambridge, however, under which heading I fear he would have included three-fourths of the total, he had no good word, or rather he had no word, but simply regarded them as outside the pale. He neither knew, nor even appeared in the least anxious to know, anything about them. There was perhaps some justification then for such an attitude. Things have changed vastly. The term 'Small College,' as used in connection with Cambridge, had a distinctly invidious significance, for it did not mean mere paucity in numbers. There is no doubt that the typical public-school man of those days looked askance at all but four or five Cambridge colleges. My father's blankness of mind towards them was unfortunately stimulated at Marlborough when a worthy, industrious boy of eighteen in the upper fifth went up quietly to Cambridge and won an open classical scholarship at one of the least of them. The moment came when the poor lad went over to the Lodge to ask for the usual scholarship half-holiday, which was indignantly refused, the master's private point of view being that a college which could take to its arms a boy who, in his full school maturity, only reached the upper fifth by industrious plodding, must be in too parlous a condition to be recognised at all. As an interested party to the extent of the half-holiday, I remember being inclined to think that the Master should have looked at it the other way, and been proud of the fact that a boy in the third form from the top could win an open classical scholarship at the university at all as a remarkable tribute to the school. But he didn't; he was too critical for that, and I am afraid it stiffened his ineradicable prejudice against the smaller Cambridge colleges, for which indeed there was then much ground, if the term

hadn't with him been so painfully comprehensive. For present-day university men may need reminding that in the sixties the contrast, numerical and otherwise, and very much otherwise, between the greater and the smaller colleges at Cambridge was far more marked than now. Life at the latter may have been pleasant, it couldn't have been stimulating. It lacked even athletic vigour, and the dons were hopelessly slack. My father used frequently (in private) to quote that incident against Cambridge to the end of his life. All this reminds me of an unrecorded story anent Dr. Kennedy, told me by my uncle, the late Dr. Edward Fox of Clifton.[1] He had been one of Kennedy's sixth form at Shrewsbury, and proceeded afterwards to Balliol. But destined for the medical profession, he applied his very considerable talents to scientific studies, and took a first-class in the then newly-instituted Science school. Writing confidentially and light-heartedly to his old chief for the usual half-holiday for the boys, he received a characteristic reply of kindly indignation from that severe classic. Everyone, he wrote, knew that no master rejoiced more in his pupils' classical triumphs than he, while even mathematical honours gave him no little gratification. He was always pleased to hear, too, of successes in athletics, and for personal reasons he congratulated his old pupil on achieving such measure of success as he had deliberately limited himself to, but really to ask for a half-holiday for science honours was —in short—well, a most audacious proposal. Kennedy and my father, as teaching Headmasters admittedly, I think, without rivals in their day—that of my father nearly covering the last twelve years of Kennedy's thirty—have often been compared, or rather contrasted. Any criticism on their different types of scholarship and system would be quite out of place here. But as men they were great contrasts. The two schools

[1] Dr. Fox was actually the first 'First-class' in the Oxford Science School.

again were quite different. The one, moreover, went as exclusively to Cambridge for good reasons as did the other to Oxford for much less definite ones; the one in small numbers being a small school, the other in force being a large one. Kennedy, great and lovable man as he was, foamed and raged, so to speak, and flogged hard for mere lapses in industry. At Marlborough capital punishment became practically unknown, except for grave moral offences, and caning by assistant-masters was extremely rare. As regards teaching, a few quiet words in my father's satirical style, for reasons to which print unfortunately can give no elucidation, were feared quite as much as the block. In spite of Kennedy's great teaching reputation his school was nearly always small. He complains himself that his average number through all his time was only about one hundred and twenty-five. A certain portion of these, too, were town boys. A tradition of antagonism existed between the town and the school for various reasons, which is even now, with prosperity smiling over the long transferred and expanded buildings on their beautiful new site, not yet extinct. The old site, moreover, was very cramped. There were few of the appurtenances common to most other important schools, and it is not surprising that even Kennedy's reputation failed to give numbers to Shrewsbury. The marvel is that he accomplished so much with so few.

In spite of his rigid though extremely sane discipline, and a caustic tongue, which spared him all the physical efforts of many of his contemporaries, my father was beyond any doubt as loved as he was in a sense feared at Marlborough. I should not venture this much if it were open to question. Loved and revered would perhaps more adequately express the attitude of those in direct and indirect contact with him. In regard to the teaching of the sixth, Latin composition, it is probably superfluous to state, was

my father's strong point, seeing that most upper schoolboys and schoolmasters to-day are, I believe, tolerably intimate with his printed views upon the subject. But cold print is a very different thing from the intense and vivid personality that was thrown into the lessons themselves. The late Professor Butcher, almost the last and perhaps the most brilliant of all his pupils, wrote a chapter on his old master's teaching some twenty years ago for *The History of Marlborough College*, a few words from which may be to the point, reluctant as one feels to deal in fragmentary fashion with so eloquent a tribute. 'No one probably,' says Mr. Butcher, 'has ever employed Latin prose so successfully as an instrument of education. From week to week we looked forward to the hour when our compositions were to be returned with mingled feelings of dread and pleasant expectation. An intellectual treat the lesson was sure to be, but seldom one of pure enjoyment. Our exercises came back to us black with pencil marks; but no corrections were made. There was no attempt at rewriting what was wrong, but a few exclamatory remarks were jotted over the page. The Headmaster took our Latin, held it up to the light, turned it inside out, translated it back into its true English equivalent, producing a medley of incongruous phrases. He revelled, as it seemed, in our absurdities, and we ourselves shared the enjoyment. But in another moment he spoke with trenchant irony and all the force of moral denunciation; we as guilty criminals and in confusion of face looked down upon our scrawled exercises, and withdrew them from the eyes of those who were next to us on the benches. Then again he fell back into playful invective and humorous illustration. And so the hour went merrily by. The frequent recurrence of the same mistakes never blunted the edge of his satire, or abated his interest in explaining some delicacy of phrase.

'Certain barbarisms never failed to provoke his wrath and sarcasm. Those who had been some time in the sixth acquired no little skill in dispensing altogether with the dangerous words. They were then able to watch with malicious amusement the discomfiture of the newcomers from the upper fifth who hitherto had fancied themselves to be rather pretty composers in the Latin language. But no one was really safe; the snares were well set, and again and again we fell into hidden pitfalls. If it did so happen that our compositions came back to us clean and unseared, we welcomed them with a deep sigh of relief and satisfaction. We could then listen with less anxiety to the brilliant and almost baffling discourse which followed. To this we could not but attend, whether we wished it or not. No faculties were so dormant as not to be quickened by this infectious vitality. Here was a teacher born to the work, possessed by his subject, rich in experience, with an energy that seemed inexhaustible; teaching indeed Latin prose, but finding in it an opening for endless excursions into large fields of language and literature. At last when wit, learning, denunciation, jest and earnest had done their work, he would dictate a fair version of the passage, in which every word seemed to have its exact value, and to fall into its proper place; in short, we had before us a model of classical form and rhythmical sound. What we got at Marlborough was Latin steeped in the personality of a teacher who rejoiced in its idiom, in its logical precision, in its rhythmical cadences, but who also made it a vehicle of wider literary training and a great educational discipline.'

No excuse is perhaps needed for this vivid picture, from the pen of so brilliant and renowned a scholar, of the master at whose feet, only in the less inspiring form of cold print, many undoubtedly of my readers have willingly or unwillingly been constrained to sit. To turn for a moment to

the writer of the above lines, who went up to Trinity with a ready-made reputation as a practically assured senior classic, and that, too, in a year which included Mr. Verall and Mr. Page (second and third). Preposterous farces known as classical lectures, which all first-year men indiscriminately were compelled to attend, Livy or Herodotus in hand, after the manner of a fourth form lesson without any of its stimulants, grave or gay, its hopes or fears, went wearily forward every morning in the Cambridge of those days. Being of the same year and on the same side at Trinity as my distinguished schoolfellow, it fell to me to be his immediate neighbour at these wearisome entertainments, and it used to amuse me no little to note how wistfully our bored lecturer's eye used to light upon my neighbour, and with inequitable frequency to 'put him on to construe,' or in more dignified language, to request him to oblige the company. Very few of the company, I am quite sure, cared a brass farthing for anybody's rendering, being mentally or literally engaged on other topics. But I am certain the lecturer himself enjoyed these lucid intervals, and he deserved some refreshment, for a more aimless morning hour was never enforced on tutor or pupils in a renowned seat of learning. Occasionally the farce was lightened by a touch of humour. One morning I remember, whether from sardonic motives I know not, but possibly because his conscience suddenly smote him after an unwontedly protracted enjoyment of Mr. Butcher's nervous English and sympathetic accent, the lecturer turned to a low-browed sporting baronet at the other end of the room, fresh from the fifth or thereabouts at Rugby, and with that politeness which all freshly emancipated schoolboys must, I am sure, have always felt as something of a shock, requested him to illuminate the next few paragraphs for the benefit of the room. The lusty Nimrod went ahead nobly and

without a check to the surprise and edification no doubt of those who were not privily concerned with other things, for perhaps half a page, when the lecturer quietly intervened, 'Thank you, Sir Timothy. Now you have given us Mr. Bohn's version' (that invaluable book being ill concealed on his knees), 'perhaps you will be kind enough to give us your own.' Sir Timothy frankly confessed his inability to oblige, and there was an end of the matter.

My father instituted a systematic practice at Marlborough, till then, I believe, unknown at any other public school. At any rate I am quite sure that the terror it created was, and remains, unique. Once in the half-year he himself took each form in the school for a single hour. This ordeal was known as 'Review,' and it is no disparagement of subsequent headmasters to say that it lost with my father's exit the significance which alone makes it worthy of record. Indeed it is now practised, I believe, in many big schools, and regarded, I am told, by lower forms with favour, as a pleasant interlude for which no preparation is required. The ceremony was not conducted in the ordinary class-room of the form, but at the further end of the Adderley library, the most beautiful and imposing room in the old Seymour house, furnished and equipped to hold the fine collection of books presented to the school in its dark days by one of its founders, and, of course, continually added to. It was a silence chamber, chiefly frequented by sixth form boys and masters of a literary or studious turn, and always pervaded by a pleasant odour of cedar wood and morocco. Many lofty deep-seated Queen Anne windows followed in procession along one of its sides. That side was the south, and the morning sun streamed in through them. Bees hummed in summer-time among the flowering creepers and roses that trailed against the old brick walls. Outside was the semicircular bowling-green, with its curving terrace

of mellow turf, the dome-shaped yew trees, and the tall limes on whose tops rooks were always noisily swinging, while the faint murmur of the Kennet tumbling over the mill-dam in the further background just reached the ear. But none of these things brought any comfort to the trembling forms, whose members twice a year, and in a majority of cases probably for the only occasion in their lives, were introduced into that long high-pitched and exclusive chamber, which preserved, and still preserves, its silence and serenity through all the years amid the clamour of school life. What were they afraid of? Any one of the thousands could answer better than I. No punishment of any kind whatsoever threatened them. There were not, I think, even marks! It was the quietest lesson of the term. There were no outbursts of either satire or enthusiasm as in the sixth form lessons. Nor was there anything, of course, in the nature of teaching. What then was there?

There were interludes of deadly silence while the Headmaster looked up and down the list of the form, took in their names, and recalled something about them, for which he had an uncommon gift. Then came at intervals a few leading questions, a boy here and there put on to construe, followed by a criticism of perhaps a dozen words, sometimes only by a shake of the head, often by a too eloquent silence when a pin could be heard to drop. Occasionally a brief commendation when an audible stir of satisfaction and relief went round the form, and it breathed again; more often four or five words of satire rapped out, and the thermometer went down to zero. The hour didn't pass merrily, but it was very quiet, and when the ordeal was over, and its released victims were out in the fresh air again, they wondered perhaps why life had seemed so black an hour or two previously, though they were quite certain to take the same gloomy view of it on the next occasion. The Headmaster

then passed quietly into the master's common room next door, probably empty at such an hour. For there lay a certain book, and in it he inscribed some brief remarks, perhaps only a single sentence embodying his opinions of the form gathered and summed up with fatal accuracy. This was for the form-master, who, when the coast was clear, emerged from his lair, where tradition had it he spent the most miserable hour of all, to read his fate—well, not his fate, perhaps, but a verdict of moment to all, and to some perhaps significant enough.

The next meeting of the form and its master has some humour in the restrospect. There was for once a feeling that they were all in the same boat, and had been through the fire together, as it were, and still survived ; sometimes intact when all was beaming, sometimes severely lacerated, when the form-master being only human, shifted on to the boys their share of the burden, if not all of it. A middle or lower form, shivering on the brink of 'Review,' was a familiar spectacle to all that generation, and one dear to the pen of the local wit in prose and verse, and to the heartless among the passers by of the moment. For the suspense was one of the terrors of the ordeal. It was incumbent upon the victims of the day that they should gather previously in the corridor outside the locked door of the Adderley library, and await the dread arrival of the Headmaster, who brought the key and preceded them in.

These groups, wan of aspect, or cultivating a painfully forced cheerfulness, are among the outstanding memories of all Marlburians of the sixties. For the awesomeness utterly vanished from the function with Dean Farrar, as it would have done with any other successor. It was the tribute to a single personality. It was such a curiously and characteristically personal matter that I should almost shrink from straining my readers credulity, if it were not

for the fact that Marlburians of the sixties are still numerous aboveground, and that any one of them would pronounce at once that the above picture is the simple, literal, and familiar truth.

Nor should I perhaps care to repeat again with emphasis that my father was universally revered at Marlborough in his day, and his memory after leaving cherished with a devotion that has never been surpassed since Arnold, if it were not a mere truism, with his generation of boys and masters. With his extraordinarily biting tongue the place he held in the affections of the place, and the memory he left behind him, not merely in the school, but in the town and neighbourhood, is the more remarkable. The wounds he thus cut with his tongue seem never, or rarely, to have rankled. He healed them somehow by an application of the other side of it. The victim in time began to treasure up the sarcasms, like the rest of the audience, and even to quote them against himself, till they passed into the memorabilia of his schooldays. A pretty general consensus of opinion accounts for no little of the regard in which my father was held by the knowledge that he was absolutely straight. That which he promised or threatened, he would carry out to a positive certainty without fear or favour. At the same time he was well known to have a kind heart; I might go myself a little further, and say a soft one. In epidemics, of which there were some very serious visitations, and in one year several deaths, he was not only assiduous at sick-beds regardless of infection, but on many critical occasions watched through long nights with the doctor, no slight strain for an overworked headmaster of a large school, who himself rarely knew what it was to feel quite well.

The mass of boys who, as in any big public school, do not come under the immediate notice of the Headmaster probably in the main adopt the attitude of those who do. My father,

moreover, had a happy knack of saying something unexpected and acceptable to the unknown boy on chance encounters. He was very strong in English history, combined with a lively sense of its topographical associations, and possessed a retentive memory for the belongings of boys in the school whom he could not know by sight. So when the abashed fourth form boy had touched his cap and announced his name to the Headmaster's friendly overtures, in the forest or in the cricket-field, he would be often amazed by some brief, cheery allusion to his uncle or his father, in bygone days at Oxford or Rugby, or some reference—not in the manner of the sixth form room—to some characteristic of his own home neighbourhood. Next, indeed, to my father's classical teaching came his history with the sixth. He was very partial to this, and so were they. It was a truce even for such as in scholarship offered themselves habitually as marks for his barbèd shafts. The great Civil War was his favourite English subject, and his lessons were partly lectures and partly amicable conversation. He loved to trace the campaigns over the surface of England, and the only intimidating moments were for luckless wights who happened to live near Naseby or Marston Moor, or Newbury, and could not supply some local detail that might be wanted. Mr. F. D. How, in his interesting book *Six Great Headmasters*, quotes an occasion when a boy in the middle fifth was sent for to describe the course or the nature of a brook in his parish, which was of import to the discussion.

To come for a moment to domestic matters, my father entertained his upper boys very freely, and his sixth form dinner-parties, in groups of half a dozen, often to meet his other guests or local neighbours, were a regular and much appreciated institution. Parents didn't descend upon schools, certainly not schools in remoter situations in those days, as they do in these. But in cases of severe illness the Lodge

offered hospitality often for weeks at a time to fathers and mothers, occasions which were sometimes the beginning of lifelong friendships. Of the casual and, according to the cannons of those days, the aimlessly visiting parent not conscious of the value of time, my father had a pious dread, and sometimes used to thank his stars he was not Headmaster of one or two famous schools which he knew pretty well, and which, for obvious reasons, were particularly afflicted with this distracting feature.

Marlborough, as before related, lay nearly equidistant, and roughly a dozen miles from three stations, to the north, east, and west respectively, to wit, Swindon, Hungerford, and Devizes. Early in the sixties the G.W.R. line to Devizes passed Savernake, five miles off. A few years later came the branch line from thence to Marlborough. I remember the grand inaugural ceremony when the first train, with all the local notabilities on board, my father among them, made its initial trip, and in that epoch-making enterprise failed several times to get up the first incline. Tradition has it that a dog belonging to one of them, becoming bored, jumped out, and reached Savernake, whence it came, a very easy first. But a quarter of a century had then elapsed since forty coaches daily had changed horses at Marlborough. There were still some well-known old Bath Road Jehus about, fiery of face and rich in anecdote. Till the railway reached the town, it had been a portentous undertaking to get the four hundred and odd boys away to these various remote stations. No wonder the school authorities were shy of the three-term system.

My father's passion for riding had glorious scope in what was probably the very best bit of England for its indulgence. The vast downlands spread for miles in most directions, while Savernake Forest, as an equally handy alternative, offered twenty or more square miles of noble woodland,

its renowned beech avenues in every direction crossed laterally by glades of smooth turf. He was popularly supposed to always ride at a gallop, but then it was such a galloping country. As a matter of fact his spare hours were extremely limited, and he liked to get out to places near by, such as Alick Taylor's trial course on Rockley Down, and race up and down it. Many a tout lurking with his glasses in some commanding lair must have been surprised to see the solitary figure of a little horse and a little dark-clad man covering the long undulations of the course at top speed. My father, it may be allowed perhaps to remark, had a conviction that male infants ought to learn to ride, and continue to ride, without stirrups. Now a galloping small pony is not exactly a circus horse, and the writer has a lively recollection at a tender age of being gradually shaken to a jelly, and wondering whether some of those interminable gallops into what then appeared infinite space were ever coming to an end.

Pigeon flying was a lifelong passion of my father's, a lapse from academic convention that in cold print rings strangely. He bred and flew carriers with scarcely any interval from his early boyhood almost till he went to Westminster. Marlborough naturally was the best flying ground he had ever had, and once or twice every day he was in his pigeon-loft among the birds, every detail of which he attended to personally. He got very little active sympathy, I fear, either within or without his family in this hobby. A pigeon-loft is an acquired taste, and very seldom acquired. If perchance a boy in the school was discovered with it, well —it was very nice for the boy! My father in his loft could catch a panic-stricken pigeon on the wing with either hand, as a clever point takes a cricket ball, but neither cricketers nor others could do it, and he was inclined to regard one's futile efforts in the serious light of a dropped catch. Most

guests left the house bearing with them a hamper of live birds to be let out of the carriage window at appointed stations on the London or Bristol line, and many a tempestuous scene in the dispatch thereof has disturbed the equanimity of unsuspecting passengers.

I well remember, too, Archbishop Benson in the first year or so after Wellington was founded, coming often to consult my father, sometimes, I think, on horseback; and for the same obvious reasons came Arthur Butler, another old Rugby friend, who was struggling successfully with the beginnings of Haileybury.

The finances of the school, as already stated, were put upon a sound footing during my father's time, under the able management of the bursar, J. S. Thomas, and the property purchased. Its continuous prosperity, aided in some directions by the munificence of old Marlburians, provided for the improvements in building and the like that have gone on ever since. In the sixties there were just the two large houses—the old Seymour house and a new one of equal size, together with a third for the lower school, all on the hostel system, and only one outside boarding-house. At the very end of my father's time, however, there were two very serious outbreaks of scarlet fever, so serious and notorious that they would have tested the stability of almost any school. The trouble was known in every corner of England. For the public were by this time beginning to take that interest in the principal schools which is the feature of to-day, and there were comparatively few then large enough and vigorous enough to attract it much; but Marlborough had by now five hundred and thirty boys. A thorough overhauling took place. New boarding-houses were built out in the country, and other things done that were recommended by a Sanitary Commission. The school was temporarily reduced till the improvements, which were designed

for relief of space, not augmentation in numbers, were in due course completed, when it filled up again at once to the old figure under the late Dean Farrar.

The mystery of those repeated outbreaks in a place conspicuously healthy and hitherto enjoying average immunity from such troubles, and with no discoverable drainage shortcomings, had overtaxed my father's strength for the time, and when he was offered the mastership of his old college at Oxford he accepted it. 'The influence of his personality on masters, prefects, and the school in general had been so great,' writes one of his sixth form of that day, 'that the news was received with something like consternation, for he seemed an essential part of Marlborough. His influence was something extraordinary, resting on respect and affection, largely tempered with awe.' His own sorrow at leaving was profound, and nothing but what seemed at the time, though not yet fifty, the prospect of a physical breakdown would have induced him to such a step. Moreover, it was a great loss of income. The council of the college had considerably advanced the Headmaster's salary, and in my father's case, in recognition of their debt to him, had made still further additions, regarded, I think, as personal. Twice during his twelve years he had declined to leave Marlborough for positions that were more weighty in the eyes of the world, and far more lucrative. One secret, no doubt, of his power was the happy selection of his twenty to thirty assistant-masters. They certainly come back to one as a most admirable body of men. One could name many indeed who became distinguished in the world as bishops and academic luminaries. But this would be inequitable when one thinks of others who remained and gave their whole working lives to the school, not to outgrow their utility and become slightly pathetic objects to later generations of boys, but, on the contrary, with unabated vigour and

patriotism to assist my father's successors in maintaining the high standard that he had set.

I was in the school myself for about four years, but for a longer period than that was in fairly close touch with it. There is no question but the tone was exceptionally good. There was scarcely any flogging or caning, and discipline was admirable, while there was, I think, virtually no bullying. The sixth form had things well in hand. Fagging was sufficient, but not enough to make a small boy's life a burden. Masters, a rare thing then in most great schools, had already become on accessible and friendly terms with the boys. The former had, to be sure, fewer outside distractions in a remote country place, which in its turn made for a certain freshness and naturalness in the boys themselves—a trait altogether to the good, and generally recognised in those days as a characteristic of the place by university dons. The school certainly drew from admirable sources. The centres of well-to-do life had not shifted to cities and suburbs to anything like the present extent. A great majority of the parents of those days were themselves university men or its equivalent, and the lads came generally from homes where tradition and atmosphere were favourable to the making of public school boys. The West of England was still, though railroads were beginning to annihilate such sectional tendencies, the great source of supply. Throughout Dorset, Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall pretty nearly every family, through sons or cadets during its first thirty years, had associations with Marlborough. The clergy, whose sons had been admitted on a favoured scale, were now restricted in number and elected by competition on a system akin to foundation scholarships.

There was then at Marlborough practically none of that compulsion in games so dear to the heart of the modern schoolmaster, for tolerably obvious reasons. There was no

need for it. I venture to think that without that dull and deadening principle, boys with the slightest taste for cricket and football played with as much ardour and organisation as any do now, while those temperamentally indifferent or naturally inapt found something better to do than going in last in a lower game, and running after, perhaps, a dozen balls in the course of an hour or two's fielding. There was fortunately ample room in the playing fields at Marlborough. The Eleven ground was as good as almost any of that day, and if the wickets on which the other dozen or more games were played were indifferent, that fact, at any rate, made boys watch the ball more carefully, and gave them all the more confidence when they emerged on to a good wicket and a professional's coaching. The coddling of lower boys on billiard-table wickets, with professionals and masters prematurely cramping their natural development, seems to me a poor sort of business. The heroes then were just as much heroes, but they were not wholly allowed to forget their limitations, and I think were more justly appraised at most good schools. My father was very keen about the school games, and had, at any rate, sufficient technical knowledge to watch them, which he did with a good deal of interest. But he was rather impatient of the mere athlete unless he had some other decided merits, and if he failed to acquit himself on the great annual occasions he was made to feel that his existence, or at least his heroship, was not justified, which must have been extremely good for him. After a failure against Rugby at Lord's, I know that the members of the eleven who were in the sixth were thankful that many weeks were to elapse, and the sting of defeat to pass away, before he said his five or six words on the subject.

There were always some cricketers of talent among the masters, who played at the nets, or against the school on such occasions as everywhere offer themselves, and took

a natural interest in the eleven, though extremely chary in those days of offering unsought advice in matters of selection, as it was apt to be resented. But 'cricket masters,' and, worse still, 'football masters,' in the modern sense, in those days were not. It must greatly simplify the question of discipline to herd a whole school into ten or fifteen acres on a half-holiday, and have done with it. Originality in outdoor pursuits at public schools seems effectually stamped out. The idea that a boy can enjoy a country ramble seems to be inconceivable to the modern custodian of youth. Though not one of the number myself, I am quite sure that the boys at Marlborough who did not play games enjoyed themselves thoroughly. Numbers of fellows knew every inch of the countryside, including the mazes of Savernake Forest for miles round. That kind of thing was, I think, altogether more in the atmosphere of English life than it is now. Boys were not so hopelessly gregarious and dependent on a crowd for amusement as they now seem to be. Perhaps they have been brought to it! But if you mention Martinsell, or Avebury, or the 'Four-mile clump' to a Marlborough boy to-day, it is even chances that he gazes at you blankly.

I can vividly recall the country rangers of old days, in twos and threes or groups, streaming out of the school gates after hall and making for the open, with 'leave off call' in summer if they could get it. Squirrel-hunting was still a survival from the old bushranging days of Wilkinson's time, a quite stimulating sport in which 'squailers,' a foot of cane with a knob of lead at the end, were flung, and by experts with singular accuracy, at the agile quarry which leaped from tree to tree along the glorious beech arcades in Savernake Forest. There was a little mild poaching perhaps, but not much, and I think smoking behind haystacks, the bogy of the schoolmaster, was a quite inconsiderable item.

There was, moreover, a very strong Natural History society at Marlborough as early as the sixties, fortunate for two or three decades in the enthusiastic guidance of a master whose attainments in every branch were of the very highest order: a society that has now for half a century been a valuable contributor to the fauna and flora lore of Wiltshire. I don't think any of these field-rangers were looked on askance by the athletic majority. The British boy, like the British grown-up, is rather intolerant of his fellows' tastes in amusement, when they are opposed to his own and he can't understand them. But certainly no one was called a loafer in those days who preferred this kind of entertainment to struggling ineffectually to achieve the minor glory of his house eleven or football team by the time he was eighteen. It certainly wouldn't have been prudent to have suggested it to some of these lusty sportsmen, whose instincts undoubtedly led them aright. To recall a few instances from my own memory. One of them has been a capable Governor of many colonies; another has won the grand military steeplechase at least once; a third has had a most successful military career, and is a C.M.G. Then, again, there was the gentler type of youth, constitutionally unfitted perhaps for games, but, as some mental compensation for their physical deficiencies, equipped with an imagination or a taste for books that provided a quiet enjoyment of life outside the comprehension of the vigorous and the lusty. I can recall several such creeping almost unnoticed, as it seemed, through their school life, but whom I have met afterwards doing their work well in the world, and yet looking back on their schooldays with as much affection as if they had been captain of the eleven.

It is impossible not to think that there was then more individuality among the boys in all public schools. Not very long ago I was visiting at one that, within the last

generation, has made a considerable reputation in games, if not perhaps in scholarship. The cricket eleven happened to be playing an unimportant match against some club or scratch team (not another school, which would, of course, have been quite different). Around the ground were seated on the grass apparently the entire school, largely occupied in consuming the products of the local tuck shop. It was a lovely summer afternoon and, of course, a half-holiday. But the many excellent lower grounds were quite deserted, and I remarked to a master whom I knew :

' What are these fellows all sitting here for on a fine half-holiday ? '

' Oh,' said he, ' it is expected when the school are playing a match.'

' What on earth do they gain by it ? '

' Indigestion mostly,' he rejoined somewhat grimly.

' Mayn't they go out into the country, then (it was a very good country), if they want to ? '

' Oh no, that would be regarded as loafing.'

Every now and then came applause of so chorus-like, limp, and perfunctory a nature that one almost fancied the ' cricket master ' standing in front of the pavilion, with a wand, giving the sign to an audience which looked for the most part bored, and no wonder, if they had the vigour of boys within them. It was one of the most depressing spectacles of the kind I have ever witnessed, and one may only hope it isn't general ! I can imagine my father's trenchant eloquence if he had seen the whole school sitting round eating cake and drinking ginger beer under moral compulsion on a fine half-holiday, while the eleven were playing, say, an Oxford college ! Such organised patriotism, if it can be dignified by the name, is surely a pretty poor thing.

In the sixties at Marlborough there were twelve or more regular games played every available afternoon, the limit

then of accommodation, which, inclusive of the informal activities of small boys around the fringes, meant about three hundred thus engaged, who were there because they liked it. Swimming, rifle-shooting, fives, rackets, natural history, and country rambles generally accounted for the leisure hours of the remaining two hundred, and this seems to me a healthy and sane result of natural uncoerced tastes.

I have left little space for touching upon our football at Marlborough, which was robust, picturesque, and Homeric. Cotton's Rugby masters introduced the Rugby game in the early fifties, which we were the first school to adopt, with trifling differences, on a large and organised scale, having both the requisite numbers and ample space. The Oxford Rugby Football Club in the early seventies consisted entirely of Rugby and Marlborough men, others playing as honorary members. The first Oxford team that played against Cambridge consisted, with a single exception, of members of these two schools. That once famous club, The Marlborough Nomads, founded in the sixties, was, by a long way, the first of the Old-Boys' clubs, when there were few clubs of any kind, and played for years on even terms with Blackheath, Richmond, and Ravenscourt Park, among which old Rugbeians distributed their strength with the constantly increasing recruits from the newer Rugby playing schools. It is hardly realised nowadays that football till the sixties, putting rustic carnivals aside, was regarded simply as a schoolboys' game. Its glories and triumphs ended with school life. It was a stock joke at the universities that if you went into a room full of Rugbeians, they would be discussing the date when 'Jones got his cap'; the suggestion being that such talk was of a belated nature for persons who had become 'men,' and was, in short, an aggravated description of school shop. Cricket stood on a different level altogether. Football was none the less

hearty and keen at the big schools, in spite of these limitations. At Marlborough in my day, besides Big-game—equivalent to the Rugby Big-side for which nominally sixty were eligible and wore silver braided and tasselled velvet caps—there were three other games even more hospitable, besides most spirited House matches. (The college itself was divided into six Houses.) There was no compulsion, save a moral one in the last contests, as the whole House but the physically unfit 'went up,' numbering from forty to fifty, till about 1866. An invalided enthusiast, if his feelings got too much for him, could fling his wrappings and the doctor's orders to the winds, and dash out from the onlooking crowd into the fray for a few merry moments, if no magisterial eye was upon him, without impugning either the rules or public opinion. Printed history tells of a critical goal once kicked by a swaddled inmate of the sanatorium out taking the air. I should like to have said something more, had space allowed, of the tremendous and protracted scrimmages of those days, when it was a point of honour on the part of the half-strangled gripper of the ball not to let it touch the ground till the brute force of the writhing mêlée around him and the mountain of humanity on top of all had half squeezed the life out of him. This, too, was reformed, as well as some limit put to the number of players in important games, during my time. The unravelling of these tremendous scrimmages was a sight inconceivable to the modern player. Small boys were sometimes pitched on to the top of the packed mass from sheer lightness of heart. But the breaking up was always noisy from the groans and objurgations of the prostrate heart of the scrimmage and the shouting of the inner layer to the supernumeraries behind to 'get back,' accompanied with no little heel play on their shins.

There were, of course, no Referees nor yet any passing. Offside was sufficiently punished by the shout of protest it instantly produced. When a player got the ball he stuck to it to the bitter end, except the three back players who were chosen for their dropping (punting was looked on as a low business). It was theirs to run as far as they safely could and then drop as far as they could just before they were charged, but always, if possible, inside touch. Save under peculiar circumstances, either a kick or a run out of touch was greeted with demonstrations of disapproval and impatience. As I always played back myself, from the lowest to the Big-game, my opportunities, from what might be called an outside standpoint, of witnessing the nature and the humours of these Homeric contests, were advantageous and prolonged. Till 'half-backs' were introduced about this time the responsibilities of the backs were on occasions much too great, for it was, in fact, easier in those crowded games than now for an active forward to slip out with the ball almost unawares, with a practically clear field before him, save for one of the opposing back players. The latter might or might not be equal to catching and overthrowing single-handed a fleet heavyweight. But he was there for quite another object, that of achieving long drop-kicks at the psychological moment. The late Colonel Ernley Money, who, as a distinguished Indian cavalry officer, was murdered by a fanatic a few years ago, was a player who could do both to perfection, and was the most brilliant all-round performer of my time, while the long drop-kicking of the present Sir John Shelley always comes back to me as the most conspicuous of that era. I think some of these old-fashioned drop-kicks would astonish the spectacular footballer of to-day. The late Professor Butcher[1] was about the best forward of this or about this period, though Harold Freeman

[1] Captain of football, 1868.

of International fame, and the virtual founder of the Alpine sports movement, was just becoming the giant of those days, as he was to be later on more conspicuous fields. Inter-school matches under Rugby rules, apart from other difficulties, were regarded as outside all considerations of prudence in those days, though one or other of the three or four London clubs were occasionally played, and the ' Old-Boys ' always. However, Rugby and Cheltenham were then the only possible opponents. But by the mid-sixties Clifton was coming along, was within easy distance, and the experiment was made at Marlborough. They were not yet quite strong enough but the contest fully justified the anxieties freely expressed. It was agreed that there was to be no ' hacking over,' the alternative to tackling in the old Rugby game. But the pressure of a stronger side (twenty or twenty-five was the actual number on each) proved too much for the self-restraint of the Cliftonians, and the game became most sanguinary. It was even proposed to stop it at one time, but it was eventually fought out to the bitter end. It strengthened the conviction for a long time that inter-school matches under Rugby rules were impossible.

CHAPTER IV

COUNTRY CRICKET FORTY YEARS AGO

'WUR be I to stand, Master Willie, dost know ?'

Such was the disastrous effect of the greatest occasion of his life on our trusty umpire, Elisha D——, who had officiated at almost every match the club had played for years—indeed, ever since he had grown too middle-aged and too stout to be serviceable as a bowler of fast underhand on rough wickets,—and, incidentally, held a five-hundred acre farm under the 'Markis.' This great occasion was one that doesn't come to country cricketers and country umpires nowadays. For twenty-two of us, gathered from all over Wiltshire, were facing an all-England professional eleven, including the great cracks of the day, on the spacious picturesque but fiery ground in Savernake Forest, where in normal times the local cricketer was wont to disport himself before very modest assemblages. But special trains had been run to-day, and extra tents gay with flags had sprung up like mushrooms. The imposing nature of the company, the fearful solemnity of the unprecedented occasion, the awful presence of the giants of famous name at the closest quarters, liable at any moment to yell at him, '*How's that?*' was more than Elisha could bear. It affected his head, and to our captain's dismay, as he arrived at the wicket to receive from Hill, the great fast bowler of that year, the first ball of the match on a dangerous pitch, he found our umpire rambling about in a state of mental

aberration. He had forgotten how many balls there were to an over. He had forgotten where he was to stand—witness the impassioned utterance which opens this chapter. He had lost count, my friend always declared, of even who he was and where he was. However, he managed ultimately to pull himself together, assume his accustomed judicial air, and before long was passing the five pennies, one by one, from his left to his right hand with each ball as serenely as if he were presiding over a married *v.* single match on his own village green. By the time I came in to receive the first ball, I well remember it, a yorker, full on my left toe from the fastest bowler of his day, Elisha, rosy of face and burly of form, was more than at ease and fairly swelling with the importance of his situation, and quite ready to hurl back a defiant '*Not* out' to any browbeating attempts upon a country umpire.

This was the first experiment of the kind in Savernake Forest, and there was naturally a proper anxiety that it should go off with becoming dignity and success. The first was a little upset by the antics of a weird stranger from London only included in the twenty-two as a favour to his local friends, who were among its most efficient members. Being of little use we sent him in last, which so wounded his self-esteem that he cultivated the notoriety denied him with the willow, according to his own infatuation, by performing the most preposterous antics in the field to the sustained delight of the populace, but wholly at odds with the dignity of cricket and the solemnity of the occasion. If he couldn't bat, he could stand on his head with the sustained endurance of a professional acrobat. At every one of those pauses incidental to the progress of an innings, the dismissal of a batsman and so forth, he assumed an inverted position at his place in the field, and thus balanced himself till play began again, causing great and distracting entertainment

among the crowd, though a man of some years and quite old enough to know better. This was to show his contempt for the low valuation at which we had assessed his cricketing merits. When he got back to London his choler was still burning, for he dispatched a challenge, framed in withering terms, through the local papers to the best eighteen of Wiltshire to meet eleven of his own suburban club, captained by himself. Some local patriots, who hadn't seen him standing on his head or shaping as a bat, took him seriously, and some literary entertainment was provided for quite a little time.

Those were great occasions in the West of England, for the locals knew all the names and qualities of the cracks as well as they do now—but they rarely saw them. There were few county matches, and London was then a far cry. To behold these giants actually in the flesh, lounging over their pipes after breakfast in the High Street, was a wondrous thing, only second to standing them a drink in the bar at night. For these enterprises were undertaken in September, when the great matches were over, and the great men were in a mood to mellow somewhat. As regards the combatants, too, they had, for the most part, their only opportunity of facing tip-top bowlers, or of bowling to tip-top bats. In the last process, however, they were much comforted, and their mediocre merits not a little flattered by the presence of one-and-twenty supporters in the field. Indeed the eleven didn't often make more than a hundred runs, and the scores of the two sides were generally very even. The procession of the twenty-two was apt to be fairly brisk back and forth from the pavilion. Fatalists, and those with a vivid imagination, were generally beaten before they left it, and returned at once doing scant justice to their true merits.

I belonged myself rather by temperament to the latter, but I remember when not yet quite out of schoolboy age,

in one of these matches in Berkshire, making up my mind to imagine that Smith and Jones were bowling, not Southerton, the outstanding slow bowler of that period, and Wiltshire, a fast left-hand bowler with a wide low delivery, of equal renown, a scheme which on that occasion answered admirably. The wicket was absolutely perfect, and I carried my bat undefeated through nearly the whole of the first innings, and was well started on the way, I felt assured, to repeat the performance in the second, when somebody ran me out. I need not say it was the day so far of my life, particularly as most of our side failed. Indeed, I had quite made up my mind that really first-class bowling was the nicest to play, so on the next occasion, a year afterwards, encouraged by the kindly plaudits of my long memoried contemporaries, I walked with some confidence to the wicket, only to have it shattered in the first over by some notability, whose name I forget, which readjusted my sense of proportion. On one of these great occasions, at Ashdown Park, Lord Craven's place, near Lambourne, one of the biggest storms I ever remember to have seen in England swept the ground and the country after the close of the last day's play. The marquees of London contractors were whirled away bodily. Stacks of crockery and glass were shattered, while tables, chairs, and benches careered about the spacious grounds. Darkness illuminated by incessant lightning, accompanied by terrific peals of thunder, a hurricane and hailstones that killed birds, even partridges, all over the district, added to the pandemonium.

The humours of country cricket and, I think, its heartiness were greater in those days. Football didn't exist to distract, and indeed alienate the fervour of the proletariat, and what sporting patriotism they possessed was displayed under the shade of the elms, or in the refreshment tent, where the local publican had always a barrel on tap. There

were, of course, as now, two grades of country cricket. Clubs, that is to say, which could draw on university and public school men, or their equivalents, and the real village clubs where old-fashioned underhand still held its own. But both were well patronised by spectators, without any inducements of afternoon tea, which had then only just been introduced into the drawing-room, and was undreamed of at cricket, and rarely indulged in at all by men. There was more and there was less country cricket, I think, than now, if the paradox be admissible. There was practically no 'country house' cricket, as the term is now understood, nor anything like the number of amateur clubs on tour. Above all, there were no boys' holiday matches. The fourteen or fifteen year-old is to-day conveyed about the neighbourhood to country houses, where he makes one of twenty-two lads of his own class and age on a billiard-table wicket, surrounded by gorgeous and admiring throngs, and is stuffed at frequent meals with all the delicacies after which the schoolboy hankers. In old days parents did not trouble their heads much about this sort of thing. A boy had to make his own amusements, and get such cricket as he could on a rough wicket with any boys of any class he could scratch together till he was qualified to play for the local club—an object of attainment and ambition. Neither tennis nor golf then existed. The squire's son and the parson's son, to say nothing of those worthies themselves, had no summer games worth mentioning, so they played cricket whether they were any good or not, and country clubs and village cricket went better in consequence, and the different classes joined more heartily together. Cricket is certainly the national summer game to-day, so far as an interest in big matches is concerned; but I am not at all sure it wasn't more truly a national game in a popular sense before the nation went mad over

the easier to play and understand, but comparatively inferior game of football. After all, it is only a small minority of even well-to-do Englishmen have any reasonable gift for cricket, and who even wish to keep it up after they leave school, and this isn't surprising. As a regular pastime it is a pretty poor one for an individual not likely to make double figures, and quite certain not to be put on to bowl. And, after all, a large majority of well-to-do youths come under this head.

Wiltshire is, for the most part, a country of magnificent distances, of sweeping downlands, and narrow green valleys watered by chalk-streams, and punctuated by thatch-roofed villages. So country matches entailed some travelling, and in those days generally began at eleven. But the long drives in the fresh of the summer morning, ten, twelve, or even eighteen miles are still fragrant among youth's memories. There was a good deal of healthy rivalry, and there were some umpires in the country who were a tower of strength to their side, and an unfailing cause of anxiety to their opponents. When at the foot of the green hill upon which all there was of Swindon in my boyhood rested, a little market town clustering around its tall church spire, the present populous railway centre began to arise, cricket took root very kindly among the mechanics, under the leadership of a gentleman player of rather truculent type. For a visiting eleven to their excellent ground it was always a moot question whether the perils of victory or the chagrin of defeat were the greater evil. The 'stokers,' as they were called, didn't like losing, while their supporters, instead of cheering victorious opponents as their brake drove off the field, were notoriously given to pursuing them with missiles.

Among the humorous incidents that in a good deal of country cricket played in Wiltshire in remote days come back to me is one associated with a delightfully pictur-

esque village ground which lay, and still lies, between a curtain of hanging woodland and the clear waters of the Kennet, where they purl over the gravel reaches of one of the finest bits of trout fishing in England. A family of Rugbeians were the presiding genii here, some of whom assisted that school in the great days of Yardley Pauncefoote, Francis, Kenney, Bourne, and others, who figured conspicuously in school and university matches at Lord's. I always recall those brothers, as the very ideal of the old-fashioned supporters and captains of country cricket. Invaluable all round, without actual distinction in higher-class matches, they played the most rustic ones, and made their side play them in the true spirit of the game, even in those trying situations common to one-day games when the victory was already decided. I have often known them when means of transport were unavailable or costly—for they were not well off—walk five or six miles to a match with bat, pads, and shoes on their shoulders, to prove the life and support of their side. They could both, moreover, sing excellently. They are long dead, and let us hope their like is still to be found, but I more than doubt it.

On the occasion referred to the heavens descended in solid sheets during the luncheon hour. The village publican and caterer had gone round with the plate for the half-crowns, discreetly omitting certain humble individuals who had been 'arranged for' by unwritten custom. The prospect for resumption of play was well-nigh hopeless, so there was the usual resort to vocal music, the inevitable accessory to country cricket and the like in those days; gentle and simple contributing of their musical poverty or abundance. The humorous ditty, both metropolitan and homespun, perhaps prevailed. But songs of melancholy sentiment were not considered in any way out of harmony with a sporting atmosphere and a churchwarden pipe,

while the expressions of the mixed assembly composed themselves to enjoy either with wonderful flexibility. The sudden transition from the hearty chorus, 'I owns I likes good beer,' a classic of those days in that country, to 'The Officer's Funeral,' was effected with ease. Perhaps they were less critical in those stay-at-home days. The music hall was much further away, nor did Sims Reeves, Santley, or Jenny Lind discourse to them in the local pot-house through the medium of the gramophone. Everybody had his particular repertoire, while there were many individuals of only a single song, if such it could be called. And when the resources of the talent had been exhausted, and this reserve, so to speak, were called out one by one, the song expected of each was coupled as a matter of course with the demand. Mr. Jones—(hear, hear, rapping of knife-handles on the table)—Mr. Jones, 'The Vly be on the Turmuts.'

Mr. Jones, who had acquired a monopoly in that great Wiltshire song, in which a proper rendering of the vernacular is even more important than the melody—though the Wiltshire regiments, I believe, march to the latter with extra verve—would then deliver it with its rousing masterpiece of a chorus :

'The vly be on the turmuts,
The vly be on the turmuts,
It be arl me eye for I to try
To kip they arf the turmuts.'

Charles Brampton, the old Nottingham cricketer of the late fifties, better batsman than bowler, who through the sixties as professional at the college imprinted his graceful style on many excellent cricketers, kept a shop for the rest of his life in Marlborough, and naturally took frequent part in local cricket. He had no little distinction of appearance in face and form, and a singularly composed and grave

demeanour, and walked the High Street with a leisurely pose and air that is unforgettable. He was a perfect type of the old-fashioned, high-class, north-country professional, with a bustling, voluble, motherly little wife in the shop whose glorious north-country accent and sayings were the joy of boys, and who worshipped the very ground which felt Mr. 'Braampton's' really stately tread. Of tall, lean, well-knit, upright figure, his hair parted behind in the old-fashioned manner, a single roll of short well-curled whisker describing a half-circle from ear to ear beneath his chin, suggested a man of settled habits and fixed opinions, even then. Unencumbered by any sense of music, he rendered, upon demand, for the whole of his life, so far as I know, a single ditty consisting of only a single verse which proclaimed the bald fact that from Wimbledon to Wombledon was seventeen miles, and that from Wombledon to Wimbledon was also seventeen miles, the chorus being 'Rule Britannia'; verse and chorus being repeated as often as the mood of the company seemed to demand. It must have been the imperturbable gravity with which the singer, being also a man of character, rendered his masterpiece, as also the gathering force of long tradition, which apparently made it more indispensable and more loudly called for as the years went by. Perhaps we were easily amused in those days! There was not much fun though on the occasion, the memory of which provoked this brief parenthesis. Our dinner tent was a gigantic rick cover stretched over a ridge pole of vast dimensions and altitude. The songs were going rather dolefully as our day was obviously spoiled, when suddenly, with a roar like a thunderclap, the heavy soaking sailcloth high above us rent from end to end, and fell with all its weight upon the top of the company, burying both elevens, tables, dishes, glasses, everything in wild confusion beneath its sodden folds.

There were no boundaries in those days except such as irremovable obstacles like buildings or fences interposed, and they were regarded as unavoidable drawbacks. Even Lord's and the Oval had none in the modern sense. Fives often, and occasionally even 'sixers,' were run out on both grounds. A snick worth three, and a hard drive worth six, being both alike counted as four, would have been then regarded as a monstrous blemish, and so I venture to think it is. Everything possible was run out, and a ground that gave unlimited scope for hitting fives, sixes, or even sevens had proportionate attractions for every cricketer, naturally and rightly. Whatever improvements there may, or may not, have been in the game, the present system of curtailing the limits till small hits and little lucky snicks earn as much as the finest low drives, while the batsman makes half his runs without the test of running for them, is surely a decadent move. In metropolitan or urban grounds the exigencies of the spectator and his commercial significance are no doubt imperative, but when one sees unlimited scope for a due reward, recognition of hard hitting deliberately curtailed with flags or ropes or chalk lines to the ultimate benefit of comparative weaklings, and the saving of effort to fieldsman and batsman, it seems a pretty poor thing.

The Eleven ground at Marlborough was a level terrace cut in a gentle slope, now, I believe, considered large enough to constitute a boundary according to modern ethics. In old days such limitations placed on meritorious hitting would have been considered an outrage, and undoubtedly the game would have been robbed in our opinion of some of its most exhilarating sensations. I think it had then the reputation in the cricketing world of offering the greatest potentialities to big hitters of any ground frequented by outside amateurs, and in the sixties only about half a dozen

schools were strong enough to be accounted worthy of a visit by good teams. As many more were fast coming along, but had not quite arrived. On one side of the level arena was a steep bank, and below it the ground sloped gently through the lesser games into illimitable space. Mr. Mitchell, the famous old Eton cricketer, held the record when I was a boy for, I think, a 'niner.' I was playing myself, however, against the school when the hit of all time was made by one of our side, a local gentleman-farmer of only moderate talent, but who, nevertheless, secured himself immortality that day by one single and mighty swipe. I can see his partner, a wicket-keeper of distinction, but not adapted to long-distance running, tumbling headlong in mid-career from sheer exhaustion when the eleventh run was within easy grasp, and nimble boys, not miscellaneous adults, it may be remembered, were after the ball.

All three of the Grace brothers, living as they did not so very far away, used to come over occasionally and play against the school in the sixties. E. M., with his lobs and effective but countrified batting, was very familiar there. I well remember on one occasion, when being present as 'spare man' on the school side, and deputed in consequence to fill a vacancy in that of the visitors, the Doctor running me out in the most flagrant manner, and nipping all hopes of much wished for achievement in the bud. But it was a little later, on 28th September 1869, as a matter of fact, that W. G., then arrived at his full fame and maturity as admitted champion bat of England, came down to play, and, succumbing almost immediately to a fast ball in the first innings, gave occasion to an anecdote that has done duty on and off in the newspapers ever since, and been generally attributed to some other and impossible occasion. The manner of the hero's early defeat, except to the delighted boys at the time, is of no interest, but his conqueror, I

remember, was a Devonshire boy named Kemp, who, though very short of stature, was extremely strong, and bowled at an astonishing pace. It is possible the great man's calculations were upset by the unexpected dispatch with which the ball flew towards him, from the hand of so short a bowler, for I think it was the first one from him that demolished his wicket.

Now it was our custom at Marlborough in a two-day match for both elevens to dine together at the high table in hall at night, after which the visitors, or some of them, usually went with the others to evening chapel, where the music was very good. The hymns were always arranged and listed some time ahead, and strangely enough on this particular night, when W. G. occupied a stall, it fell to the choir to sing that fairly well-known one containing the painfully significant line, 'The scanty triumphs grace hath won.' The effects of this following immediately on the champion's unexpected downfall were something of a trial to the demeanour of the congregation. But a really happier coincidence than even this one occurred in the same building about twenty years later. The school on this occasion were playing their annual match against Cheltenham on their own ground, and on the first day two Marlborough bowlers, Wood, afterwards in the Oxford eleven, and Stone, had played no little havoc with the Cheltonian wickets. Quite fortuitously, as in the other case, the hymn that was sung in chapel that night contained the verse :

> 'The heathen in their blindness
> Bow down to *wood* and *stone*.'

But returning to country cricket, the Purton Club, Purton being a village near Swindon, was in the fifties a combination of note through all that part of England. The chief factor in its reputation was that great old-time cricketer

and bowler, Mr. Budd. I have known many people, nay, some are yet living, who in youth played at Purton against this redoubtable veteran. In its salad days the school used to meet the neighbouring country clubs, whose free hospitalities were, I believe, a constant cause of anxiety to the authorities. The Purton match was the great event of the season, and Mr. Budd, then approaching seventy, who bowled a curious mixture of under and round arm, much resented the liberties which the boys took with his straight balls; for to his generation the most egregious long hops or half-volleys were entitled to respect if they were on the wicket. The last match he ever took part in was on the school ground in 1850, and an irreverent swiper hit three of his balls in succession over the bank. When the last ball, which completed the over, was returned to him, the old gentleman dashed it violently on the ground, and vowed that it was not cricket, and that he would never bowl another ball. And he never did, dying two years afterwards. We have a delightful sketch of him in the act of bowling, by one who knew him on the cricket-field, attired in a white flannel Eton jacket, with a white top-hat on his head. This last match of his attracted some notice in the sporting press, as there was fifty years' difference in age between himself and the Marlborough captain who bowled him in both innings, namely Mr. E. L. Bateman, who played afterwards for Oxford and Notts, and till his comparatively recent death was a well-known member of the Marylebone committee.

Mr. Budd's brother, a gentleman-farmer near Avebury, was yet more eccentric and forceful, and won a great reputation in the machine-breaking riots earlier in the century. He seated himself on his boundary fence with a double-barrelled gun, and, as the mob surged towards him, after visiting various homesteads, swore he would shoot the

first man who crossed it, a threat which proved entirely effective. He played such an active part afterwards in suppressing the riots that the magistrates of the county united in an address to Lord Melbourne, recommending the captain to his favourable notice. He was an old naval man who had fought with ardour in his youth under Nelson, and, though the kindest of masters to his labourers and dependants, brought the discipline of the quarter-deck to bear on the incorrigible. There is, or was, a pond in Winterbourne which any one may see by the roadside near his old farm, and an old friend of mine who, in his youth, knew the Captain well, used to say it was the inevitable goal of all who defied his benevolent despotism. He called it his cold-water cure, and practically ran the parish on that system.

The most ludicrously unpleasant adventure that ever befell me personally in connection with country cricket occurred in the middle of the Hampshire Downs. One of the Rugbeian brothers previously alluded to and myself had been invited to play for a distant club we knew next to nothing about at a place remote from us, of which we knew even less, to wit, Hurstbourne Park, near Whitchurch. Why we went to so much labour and outlay under the circumstances I do not know, but we did, and having journeyed to Newbury by an early train, found ourselves confronted by a drive of some twelve hilly miles. We there hired a horse and dogcart, but the former looked so unpromising for such an enterprise that as a precaution we had a feed of oats and a nosebag put into the trap, and it was this caused all the trouble. We had a weary time getting the beast along, and did not anticipate the homeward journey with either pleasure or confidence. However, we arrived in time, did not achieve what was presumably expected of us with either bat or ball, and in a rather dejected frame of

mind, on a dull, threatening, early autumn evening, turned our faces homewards, shook the reins, and gave the first flick to our Rosinante. There was only one train that night for us at Newbury, and I think the labouring progress we made began to arouse anxiety on this account, and after three or four miles we bethought us of the feed of oats as a possible stimulant to our poor slug. So pulling up by the roadside, I descended with the nosebag, and with no thought but a touch of pity for a horse that appeared both ancient and ill-nourished, quite carelessly unbuckled the reins and removed the headstall preparatory to giving him his feed. What possessed the malignant beast to dissemble so basely, and to play us so senseless a practical joke to no earthly profit, but only needless effort to himself, or why the poor drudge, whom, so far as our feelings would permit, we had literally to flog along, should suddenly devise so diabolic a plot, I cannot imagine. For no sooner was his head free of bridle, bit, and rein, a liberty that it seemed absolutely incredible, with a feed of oats beneath his nose, he would abuse, than he went off like a shot at a quite brisk trot, utterly oblivious of the threats and entreaties shouted at him by the now helpless passenger. In the meantime I was left lamenting in the road, naturally concerned for the safety of my friend, to say nothing of a prospective bill for the smash up of a horse and trap, to watch this wretched joker increase his pace to a canter, and thus pursue the long white road to the shoulder of the down, over which, in the gathering dusk, they all disappeared.

It was an exasperating situation to be thus left stranded at nightfall on a lonely road in a strange country, imagining all kinds of horrors ahead, though comical enough, considering the occasion of it, in the far retrospect. No friendly trap overtook me, of course ; they never do at such times. Nor did any village or hamlet break the solitude, as I

trudged along in the dark, expecting at every turn to come upon the wreck both of the trap and its occupant. I met a labourer or two, who admitted having passed a vehicle proceeding, so far as they noticed, at a tolerably brisk pace. Thus I pursued the darksome way for some three miles, carrying the headstall and the feed-bag, till the welcome lights of houses glimmered ahead, and on reaching the first one, which was a public-house, I discovered, to my astonishment and infinite relief, the horse and trap calmly standing at the door, and my friend smoking on the front seat, with an air of never having shifted either his pipe or his position since we parted company, which was, I think, actually the case. He was a person possessed in any case of a sang-froid amounting to eccentricity, and fortunately for himself had not encountered a conveyance the whole way. The old horse had swung along tolerably near the crown of the road, and taken by instinct, or possibly from experience, the right turns. The passenger thus untowardly situated had decided that the lesser of two evils would be to sit tight and shout a warning to any approaching trap in hopes that the horse would tire within reasonable period of his preposterous joke, as ultimately he did. The force of habit no doubt proved overmastering at the public-house. Few people, I should imagine, ever had so long and unscathed a night ride under such unique circumstances, and fewer still one occasioned by such a grotesque misunderstanding. Incidentally, as undergraduates, we were thankful enough to escape with nothing more than the cost of a night's lodging at the well-known 'Jack of Newbury.' For that horse would, no doubt, have been assessed by its owner on its intellectual, not on its physical value.

Those were the days in which the tradition of the 'trial-ball' still vaguely lingered in country cricket of the purely village order. A tradition, felicitously illustrated by the

old story of the butcher, who, on his wicket being shattered by the first ball of the match, indignantly refused to leave even at the umpire's decision, and eventually remained. 'Hout am I! This 'ere 's my field. If I 'm hout, hout of it you all goes!' which, of course, settled the matter. A prospectively enjoyable afternoon was once turned to bitterness by a similar case of intimidation within my own experience with a really curious sequel. An eleven of youngish boys in Clifton and neighbourhood all related to one another, of which the writer was one, fired perhaps with the notion of impressing on some antagonist how much rising talent there was in the breed, secured an afternoon engagement with a private school near by which possessed a very excellent ground. These other boys were captained by a master whose cricket abilities, it was understood, we had great cause to fear. By a rare piece of luck I happened to bowl this champion out the very first ball of the match. I deplore both this and a further egotistical reference, but they are necessary to the tale. For while the youthful clan in the field were still engaged in their demonstrations of joy, the defeated batsman was seen to be quietly replacing the bails, after which he shouted 'Trial!' and once more resumed an attitude of defence and, one might perhaps add, of defiance. We were mostly public-school boys, though rather immature ones, and felt this to be a monstrous claim. However, the master on his own ground, like the historic butcher, was too strong for us, and declaring it was the universal custom in their school we had to submit, after which he proceeded to make a century or more, and hit us mercilessly about for nearly the whole afternoon, for there was, of course, no 'declaration' in those days. I don't think any of us got an innings. I didn't anyway. About three years afterwards, on paying a visit in Shropshire, I found myself unexpectedly booked

with another guest in the house, no less a personage than the late Mr. W. H. Hadow of after cricketing fame, then just in the Oxford eleven, to play the next day for the Shrewsbury or Shropshire club against some touring eleven. It was a beautiful sunny morning, and the club, winning the toss, we two visitors were hospitably put in first, and found ourselves in for a real treat in the way of bowling. I should have enjoyed it even more had I known who was conducting the chief attack, and, for lack of reserves, I presume, was kept on most of the time. As if the stars were watching our courses, insignificant individuals though we both of us were, he hit me very hard on the face early in the innings, and if his bowling hadn't been so consistently tempting, or the fates intervened, I should probably have abandoned the contest. As it was, I scored an extremely merry 70 or thereabouts before being dismissed, and Mr. Hadow was still laying about him with another partner when the heavens descended, and with only one or two wickets down for, I suppose, some 200 runs—and those were days of comparatively small scores—proceedings definitely closed, and the match was finally abandoned. In the meantime the bowler in question came up to me in the pavilion, and remarked, 'I dare say you don't remember me.' The period between fifteen and eighteen seems half a lifetime, and I confessed myself at fault. His memory, however, was keener than his conscience, and he recalled himself with unabashed cynicism as the individual to whom we boys had been 'fools enough'—that was his expression—to allow that fatal 'trial ball.' 'But I think,' said he, 'we may now cry quits.' Materially we certainly might. As a sportsman I did not recognise the perpetrator of such a shabby trick as an equal, and was glad to think that I had hit him a good many times into the Severn, which partly encircles the Shrewsbury ground, and that it was

his turn now to go home without an innings. But it was an odd coincidence nevertheless.

Most round-arm bowlers in the sixties kept their arm about on a level and many even below the level of the shoulder. The feeling was certainly not extinct that overhand bowling was unfair, and on the indifferent wickets of those days it was assuredly dangerous. 'Shooters,' on the other hand, and even 'dead shooters,' when the ball didn't leave the ground at all after pitching, were eventualities that every batsman in country cricket, and to an only less extent I fancy in first-class cricket, had to cope with frequently in any ordinary innings. They partly, no doubt, accounted for the smaller scores of those days, as can readily be imagined. Fast underhand had virtually gone out by then in all but mere village cricket. There were still some rustic professors of the old art, most deadly on their own rough wickets or 'tables,' as the colloquial Wiltshire phrase then had it. The bucolic stonewaller, without any run-getting ambition, who kept his bat practically in the block-hole, and was satisfied with the sustained encouragement of his friends in the refreshment tent, offered usually the most successful resistance, though it seldom got any further. The stylish and aggressive batsman frankly feared the situation, lightly as he might, or might not, have faced it on his own better ground. A red-headed blacksmith in the Vale of Pewsey comes back to me with particular clarity as a man of wrath in that day, whose lightning deliveries, hugging the uneven 'table' of his own ground, were as likely to provide you with a pair of spectacles in the course of a summer afternoon as any set of conditions that the cricket world could show. I think it is W. G. Grace who tells of a covey of partridges being flushed between the wickets by the opening run at a rustic match. But constantly the grass was very long outside the shaven strip

on which the wickets stood, and the out-fieldsmen had practically no fielding to do. It was theirs but to mark the ball, pick it up, and throw it in. Sometimes a poor spooned-up ball of no length would conceal itself so effectually that 'Lost ball' had to be proclaimed by the distracted fieldsmen rushing wildly round in circles to prevent seven being recorded. On one occasion during the eighties I was temporarily occupying the thorny seat of scorer in a country match in Ireland. The local club were playing a regiment from Templemore. It was a church holiday, and several hundred of the 'foinest pisantry' were on the ground taking an active interest in the game, with a strong bias for the locals. The latter were batting, and a popular squireen made one of the biggest square-leg hits I ever saw in my life. It pitched over a quite distant ridge, and half the field went in pursuit of it, mainly disappearing from sight. At any rate, it was a long time before they returned with the ball, which was recovered, I believe, out of a trout stream in a woody dell beyond. But it appears that the batsman had run seven before the cry of 'Lost ball' had been signalled up to the wickets. The little scoring tent just held the scorer, and being the only erection on the ground was the point around which the patriotic crowd were chiefly gathered. The match was close, and the patriots had made up their minds that the failure to call 'Lost ball' during the seventh run added the six to the seven already earned, for it wasn't a very cricketing neighbourhood. There were great shouts of 'Thirteen be gor, every wan of 'em!' and so forth. I had marked the seven on the scoring-sheet, at which a great noise began as the news passed outside, and half a dozen excited rustic visages, exhaling a strong odour of spirits, pressed through the tent opening, all shouting the unlucky number, and enforcing their opinion with grimy thumbs and fingers on the scoring-sheet and

table. Then more shoving and jostling began outside, and some of the 'Tommies,' looking on, were attracted by the hubbub, and soon gathering the cause of it, took my view of the figure value of 'Misther O'Connor's great sthrike.' In the confusion I took the opportunity of slipping out, being a disinterested noncombatant. There was no bad temper shown, nor heads broken, but in a twinkling the little tent disappeared in a sort of football scrimmage, and play ceased for a few minutes. Having resigned my position of deputy scorer as too perilous, I do not know to this day whether 'the great sthriker' got his thirteen, though some compromise between the two figures was the least that was his due for such a portentous effort.

The biggest and most sensational hitter of the sixties and seventies at Marlborough, though of rather meteoric career, was Mr. H. R. Heatley. What Mr. C. J. Thornton was in the latter decade in first-class cricket, Mr. Heatley was in the second rank in many arenas, hitting, I believe, almost as hard. But the latter's genius for punishing every kind of ball, when on his day, stopped short, I think, at quite first-class bowling. To anything less than that he was on occasions a terror, and afforded the spectators a most exhilarating treat. He hit practically every ball regardless of its character, nearly always, too, in the air, and generally over the deepest fieldsman's head, though he was of only medium size and rather slight build. In these days such unorthodox tendencies would have been crushed in infancy at his private school, or on his way up to a public school eleven. He would probably not have been a cricketer at all, but possibly that by-product, a first-class boy golfer, and driven furiously. But when he had hit his untortured and untutored way up to the Eleven, Charles Brampton, prescient soul, didn't try to seduce him to orthodox cricket, and spoil a great hitter. On the contrary, he used to point skyward :

'That 's the style, sir; there 's plenty of room up there.'[1] He scored 139 (not out) against Cheltenham in 1870, which was, I believe, a marvellous exhibition of sustained hitting. I saw him play in the same summer in one of the only two Rugby and Marlborough matches ever played out of London in the now nearly sixty years' record of that fixture. This took place at Marlborough, and Mr. Heatley made one of his naturally frequent failures. It was thoroughly characteristic. For he only touched one ball in the first innings, but that went for eight! On that Rugby and Marlborough match above referred to several curious things happened besides the 'eighter,' which is unique, as a clean hit, I should think, in a public school match. Mr. 'Algey' Hervey, still also living, hit a six into Sun Lane, which borders the ground at a considerable distance upon one side. Mr. Westfield of Rugby, who was in pursuit of the ball, and seeing only a low hedge as he supposed in front of him, took it gaily in a leap, to fall down into the abysmal depths of what is practically a Devonshire lane, fortunately without serious damage, due no doubt to the fact that he was notoriously the hardest and toughest boy of his day at Rugby and, incidentally, an American.

During the Rugby innings one of their batsmen made a very fine hit to long leg. The late Mr. Belville Woolcombe of Ashbury Court, Devon, then the Marlborough captain, made a brilliant run along the edge of the high bank, reached the ball and held it, but fell with it in his grasp, and rolled down the long steep incline out of sight. The batsman, as he turned to run back from the opposite wicket, was told, to his astonishment, by the umpire that he was out, but, of course, could see nothing at all in the direction of his altogether satisfactory hit, and retired mortified and mystified. At any rate, thirty years afterwards, I found myself by chance playing golf with a stranger, who remarked

[1] *Hist. Marl. Coll.*

that he was going up to Lord's to see the Rugby and Marlborough match for the first time since, as a Rugby boy, he had played in it at Marlborough, when he was given out to a big leg hit, which, to his surprise, 'was said to have been caught,' but how, had been a mystery to him ever since. I was able to tell him I had seen the catch, and would introduce him, if he liked, the following week at Lord's to the man who caught him, and they could have it out, which I did.

Mr. G. D. Faber, who, in conjunction with his old schoolfellow, Mr. J. G. Butcher, now represents York in the House of Commons, shared the bowlers' adventitious credit for the catch, but next year, as captain at Lord's, he performed the remarkable feat of taking seven Rugby wickets, mostly clean bowled, in the second innings for 21 runs. On this earlier occasion Mr. Rowland Prothero, who, it is needless to say, is also still among us, and was a very fast bowler, received a touch of inspiration in the second innings. Rugby went in with only 26 to make, and the match was considered over. But five Rugby wickets went down like ninepins for 10 runs. A panic had set in, and the game was thrillingly alive. The next comer's (Mr. Lushington's) off-stump was grazed by, I think, the first ball, but only lurched backward so slightly, and shed one bail so late that by some strange chance no one saw it till the ball was in the bowler's hands again, as the wicket-keeper was at that moment 'standing back.' The umpire was nonplussed, and after a long consultation with his colleague he gave the batsman the benefit of his blankness, quite the strangest thing I ever saw in cricket, and I dare say that ever happened at a most critical moment in a match of supreme importance to all concerned. But it remained a mystery to every one from that day to this, and Mr. Gardner, the captain, a fine batsman, untroubled with nerves, hit off the runs, to the immense relief of the Rugby tail, sitting anxious and pale-

faced on the pavilion steps. The stars must have been out of their course that week, for it was that of the memorable three-run victory of Cambridge at Lord's, when Mr. Cobden, a fast bowler of rather ordinary merit, summarily dispatched the last three Oxford wickets, who had only four runs to make. I have reason to remember that gentleman's bowling, for just before that match I got one of his fast ones on the point of the chin on the Trinity ground at Cambridge, the dent of which remained for years.

I know of no cricket ground anywhere that commands so pleasant and wide a prospect as that unfolded from the high plateau on which Marlburian cricketers and their visitors have now disported themselves for some sixty years. Below, the long, ancient, red-roofed town extends itself along the Kennet valley, lying almost unaltered within the limits that have bound it for centuries, a grey Norman church tower springing at either end as if to mark its eastern and its western entrance. Above and beyond, Savernake Forest displays its skirts of beechen foliage mantling upon the steep opposing ridge. Away to the eastward the eye can follow the course of the valley down which the Kennet urges its clear streams by old water-mills and thatched-roofed hamlets to the leafy chase of Ramsbury, and thence onward to the haunted Tudor halls of Littlecote. Westward, you may look for miles up the course of the river's shrinking streams till its shallow vale is lost in the waste of windy billowy downland that spreads to Devizes, fourteen miles away. Immediately beneath, expanding outward from the old borough's western limits, you have the large group of school buildings, with the stately pile of the Seymour house dominating its younger neighbours, its abounding foliage and tall rookeries filling the background, while the tapering spire of Bodley's beautiful chapel springs high above the green water-meadows through which the Kennet in

glistening curves comes down from the chestnut groves of Preshutes' ancient church.

A prospect, in its rural way, more suggestive and richer in character and significance, I know nowhere; not perhaps for careless youth tanned and hearty in the wind and sunshine of these invigorating uplands, but for the returning man, if he have the sense of these things within him, and a proper appreciation of the halls where he was 'bred a scholar,' as the old term had it. Every age has here left its mark on a perfect type of English market town that in wars, politics, and rural economics has reflected as in a mirror the changing epochs of English life. The Wars of the Barons, the Wars of the Roses, the Wars of the Parliament, the Revolution of 1688, all stirred in the little town, with its mayors, its aldermen, its charters, its erstwhile members of Parliament and its stout prejudices, its fearful animosities, its rivalries, its tremendous trenchermen, its forty coaches a day, its rollicking fairs, great mops and little mops, its crowding sheep flocks and fat bullocks. Gone are the days, too, when haunches of venison from Savernake Forest, sent round annually by the marquis to snug, old-fashioned houses here and there, marked a general outburst of hospitality, when little dinner-parties followed in rotation, and the venison was eaten, its condition discussed, and the marquis discussed, together with the last marquis and the marquis before that, under the mellowing influence of sound old port. Then, too, there was its Royal Free and ancient Grammar School, once frequented by Wiltshire youths of all degrees, and even others from far countries, whose headmaster in the forties used to allude condescendingly at Corporation banquets to 'our younger sister recently settled in our midst.' How the younger sister offered to take it over, lock, stock, and barrel, and was rejected with warmth, and ultimately squeezed it out of

existence, or rather into its inevitable destiny of an intermediate boys' and girls' school; how the collapse of coaching left the town flat, while the building of the great railroads miles away to the north and south left it flatter still, with a prospect of becoming almost as one of the cities of the plain; how the college, sitting down in the seats of the mighty of old, the Seymours, the kings and queens and barons, became in time a bigger asset and a better friend to the town than any of these glittering personalities, arrested its decline and, assisted by a 'markis,' the tradition of whose house is to keep the builder, the speculator, and all destroyers, industrial or otherwise, of rural calm serenely at arm's length, maintains one of the most picturesque little towns in the country, quietly prosperous within its ancient bounds, and withal constantly amused;—of all these things I have written at length elsewhere. And yonder beside it the most beautiful forest in England throws the Gothic arches of its beechen avenues through miles of elemental woodland. And all around, for leagues and leagues upon the silent downs, the graves, the temples, the fortresses, the villages, the trackways of prehistoric man make mockery of time and change.

CHAPTER V

EXMOOR

The abundance nowadays of good preparatory schools presents, if anything, an embarrassment of riches to the distracted parent. But in the early sixties, those with any reputation could have been counted on the fingers of one hand. Twyford, near Winchester, was one of them, and second to none. It still flourishes, but even then was quite an old school, having been for some generations the property of the Wickham family. Tom Hughes had been there before going to Rugby. Archbishop Trench was an old Twyfordian. He was then Dean of Westminster, and took me back there to school on one occasion with his own sons, who were my friends and contemporaries, and presented me with my first outside tip. On my first entry I was deposited on the platform at Winchester Station, at the age of nine, by the butler, who celebrated the occasion, rather a formidable one to me, by returning to Marlborough that night in such a state of elevation as to terminate abruptly a brief term of service. Twyford School was, and is, a picturesque old place—bright, bowery, and homelike in its surroundings, and, I am sure, was a most admirable school. It numbered seventy-five boys when I was precipitated into its midst. The late Dean of Durham, Dr. Kitchen, was then headmaster, during the minority of the Wickham who was the actual proprietor. A very excellent Head he was, too, as well as a singularly

ornamental one. The school had naturally a rather intimate though not a formal connection with Winchester College. A portion of the archaic Wykehamist glossary was in use, and a good many of the boys in normal periods proceeded to that ancient foundation. In the earlier sixties, however, previous to the alterations made by Dr. Ridding, Winchester was, I think, in rather a lethargic condition, perhaps accentuated by the comparative paucity of its numbers. At any rate, it was not for the moment much in favour with its little neighbour and usual contributor. There was still a small Wykehamist detachment, but most of the boys went on to Eton, Harrow, or Rugby, and quite a number went to Marlborough. Twyford was run, so far as the difference in the standard of age admitted, like a good public school on a small scale. There was nothing of what would then have been accounted bullying, though a little fighting, of course, under the old code which still held good, under more formidable conditions, at the public schools. Excellent discipline was kept with wonderfully little corporal punishment. The masters were university men of a good stamp, and on very friendly terms with the boys. We had two playing-fields, and games, particularly cricket, were well organised, a state of things quite unusual at private schools in those days. Moreover, we were well fed and well looked after, and, I think, well taught. On Sundays, arrayed in tall hats, we marched two and two to the fine old parish church above the Itchen, and filled a side chapel off the chancel that had apparently been for generations allotted to the school. Prisoners' base, rounders, and bat fives filled in odd hours of play, while every boy who chose had a flower-garden of his own. The American Civil War was raging in my second year, and for some days in the winter term, I remember, we ranged ourselves into

opposing sides, of North and South, and fought quite furiously with knotted handkerchiefs or towels. I well remember the cry of 'Southern gentlemen and Northern cads!' raised by boys whose parents, no doubt, were among that great majority in England who suffered under those strange misconceptions regarding social and ethnological America. They were partly due, I think, to the Christy Minstrel songs which had just come into vogue. A vague notion that 'ole massa' must be a sort of aristocrat, and that a man who had a negro to 'bresh away de blue-tail fly' must be a gentleman. Of this, however, much more anon.

Though I left Twyford at least two years too soon, according to the usual programme of even those days, I just managed to scrape into the eleven, and consequently had the privilege of seeing the Eton and Winchester match of 1862, with its exciting finish of, I think, one wicket in Eton's favour. It was the precursor of a long series of defeats, and a depression in Winchester cricket generally for at least a decade. I was on Meads the other day, for the first time since that, to me, outstanding spectacle, and stood again under the same tree from beneath which we eleven little boys watched the gods, as it appeared to us, struggling for mastery. I remember Mr. Cleasby, the Eton captain, perfectly, and yet more, H. Stewart, the Winchester wicket-keeper, who distinguished himself so greatly, and as General Stewart fell in the Soudan within easy memory. I can remember also one of the Lubbocks hitting a square-leg ball on to the tile-roofed top of the boundary wall of Meads, which, I think, fell back on the inside.

After a year or so I went into the school at Marlborough in 1862 aged 11, too young for the large forms and collective teaching of the lower part of a big public school. A small boy wants more individual attention in his books. Nowadays, no one, of course, would dream of such a programme.

Even then, twelve or more often thirteen was the usual age of entry, and with some reluctance on my part I was dispatched to an Exmoor rectory to grow in health and stature, and, incidentally, in classical wisdom, with a view to a fresh start from a more advanced age and position. So on a cold January morning I took coach for Swindon, then a little market town clustering on a green ridge above open meadows, upon which a population of fifty thousand souls are now housed in garish streets, and procuring a ticket for Barnstaple, headed for an unknown land. The 'Flying Dutchman,' as the Exeter express was called even in those days, was the pride of west-country people, who regarded it with a sort of proprietary affection, and I suppose it made pretty good time. But the slow trains crawled, as now, up to Barnstaple at a laboured gait, and it had been long dark, and was raining hard, by the time I landed on the platform. For a while there seemed no prospect of getting any further, when a short, stout, very middle-aged gentleman in a white tie clapped me on the shoulder, declared he had been hunting for me up and down, and eventually bundled me into a two-horse fly wherein another boy was seated, got in himself, and off we went into the wet night. I was thunderstruck, not by these commonplace and wholly welcome proceedings, but it seemed incredible that this stout, old gentleman, as he seemed to me, could have played in the Marlborough eleven, and rowed in the Oxford eight but a few years back, these being the only two points I was in possession of concerning my future guardian. The mystery however, was soon out. 'This is my son; he also is a Marlborough boy, and I expect you will see a good deal of one another,' said the utterly impossible ex-No. 7 in the Oxford boat, who proved in fact to be an Essex Squarson, whose hospitality I enjoyed more than once in after years.

It was a steady drag uphill for most of the first eight miles, and then five more of perpendicular switchback, including the most precipitous long hill in Devonshire, save only that of Brendon, and rendered yet more intimidating by two extremely sharp turns. If the Squarson from the Ruthings of Essex had known it as I came afterwards to know it, and hadn't been sound asleep as the heavy fly slithered down in the dark, he would have leaped out with precipitation, as the sight of it next morning caused him, in after years, to admit unhesitatingly. The first impressions of youth are, we know, vivid and abiding, and I can very well remember first hearing, above the grating of the wheels, amid the dark of that night, the strange and novel sound of the moorland streams, then swollen with rain, tumbling in their rocky beds, and the plashing of the spouting rills that convert into torrents the byways of the west country. The Warwickshire rivers were voiceless, and the chalk streams of Wiltshire murmured but gently.

I had entered in fact into what was to prove for me an earthly paradise; but to cut short the *ego*, since my intention is but to set down some recollections of Exmoor in the sixties, I will merely state that I enjoyed it on and off, partly at this early period, and again for a longer one before going to the university for, in all, some three years. The first was at least sufficient to whet the appetite for keener enjoyments at an age much more fully equipped to appreciate them. In an article the other day by the hunting correspondent of the *Field* with the Devon and Somerset staghounds were printed these words: 'For all-round sport it would be hard to imagine a more ideal district than this parish of C—— on the north-western slopes of Exmoor.' This was our parish, and forty years ago it was still more ideal. It comprised five thousand acres about half enclosed

country and half moorland, while right through it, beginning as a small moorland brook, and afterwards expanding, and deep sunk in bosky meadowy vales, prattled that admirable trouting stream the Bray. Over this generous breadth of Arcady we had the sole sporting rights; that is to say, the rector had, and the two or three fortunate youths who happened to be domiciled with him.

It is most unlikely that anywhere else in England was such a prospect associated with life at a private tutor's, and if perchance something like it did exist, it is most improbable that the tutor himself would have been so admirable an all-round example of a muscular churchman, a gentleman, and a sportsman, as was our rector, or so well calculated to give the young idea sound and sane views of life through the medium of an intensely rural and secluded one. I have not much use for the sporting parson of popular tradition. There were a good many in North Devon in those days, and I have come across a good many in various counties since. I fail to see why a man, as fond of sport, say, as fifty thousand of his lay contemporaries, and who has probably mistaken his vocation, should acquire a reputation because he doesn't notably neglect his parishioners, conducts two services on Sunday, and neither gets drunk nor uses unparliamentary language in public. If, with precisely the same taste and capacity for sport, the same man were a country squire or a lawyer, he would not be regarded as a notability at all! The white tie does this for the very liberties he takes with it. It elevates him in certain eyes above the layman that perhaps he ought to be who rides and shoots as straight, or straighter, and often endows him with clerical attributes, such as pulpit eloquence and parochial activities, that the more judicial opinion of his own cloth and his bishop would hardly endorse. He is known, in short, as a 'd—d good chap, and one of the best.'

So no doubt he is, but why a parson? Yet if he weren't, it is quite certain that though he might possibly be eulogised as forcefully by his friends, his portrait would assuredly not figure in the sporting magazines, nor would he be noticed so often by sporting correspondents. Then again, he almost certainly, as he grows older, gets to be something of a *poseur*. It is perhaps too late now, but for an amiable young man, with a taste for sport and a little money, the career of a sporting parson should have much to recommend it from a worldly point of view, if he is tactful enough to keep right with his bishop. It is a thoroughly popular rôle in England, and not difficult to live up to for a man otherwise qualified to hold his own, say, in an average cavalry regiment. But I cannot recall any parson of quite such all-round proficiency at outdoor accomplishments as ours. He would have resented, I am quite sure, and justly, the designation of a sporting parson, but nevertheless he was a most complete all-round sportsman. Two of his qualifications have been alluded to; but more to the purpose in an Exmoor parish, he was an excellent shot and fisherman, a good horseman, though a heavy-weight, an extremely accomplished whip, and though, unlike a neighbouring rector and relative, also essentially not a 'sporting parson,' he did not run to a four-in-hand, he was fond of driving three horses unicorn when an extra long journey over the steepest hills and the worst roads in England provided a plausible excuse. Finally, he was a notoriously good and fearless swimmer, caring nothing for a high sea rolling into the coves of Headon's Mouth or Combe Martin if he could once get out through the breaking waves.

The rector, moreover, farmed his glebe, some half a dozen long fields that sloped down side by side from a projecting heathery ridge of the moor to the Bray, which sparkled through narrow green meadows below the rectory, while

beyond and above the river hung young woods of larch and fir. But it was not for these accomplishments that, as a young married man, he came up into these wilds, but because he was a parson first and a sportsman afterwards. In other words, a large scattered parish had been much neglected, and the noble patron and owner of no small slice of North Devon wanted a good man there to pull it together, and, I fancy, as some sort of compensation for the banishment entailed, made him a present of the sporting rights of the whole parish.

The stories of his predecessor were still green when I first dropped as a youngster into this Elysium. He, however, had been quite another type of the old sort, not the sporting, but the grubby and mangel-wurzely sample, whom old bachelorhood and isolation had reduced, though a man of breeding, to gradual abnegation of the graces of life, as well as of all parochial enterprise outside the glebe. The scouring out of the rectory, its amazing condition, and the uncanny things therein discovered, was a matter of quite recent history and wonderment. The drawing-room had been devoted to Swedish turnips, the best bedroom to seed-barley, and so forth. Our rector had inherited, however, from this graceless period, and from his predecessor, an invaluable treasure of a manservant, or bailiff, and much besides, who bore, no doubt fortuitously, an historic Devonshire surname. He was the delight of us youths, being a person of great originality as well as character, an eloquent raconteur from the rustically-humorous standpoint, and possessed of a fine unadulterated Devonian accent. He had seen the world, too, having assisted the Devon Militia to garrison Ireland during the Crimean War, and his reminiscences of that peaceful campaign in County Cork were as unfailing in their abundance as the widow's cruse. Except when actually between the stilts of a plough, he swung along

with an always martial tread. I can still hear its measured crunch upon the gravel drive, with the hum of bees and the plash of the waterfall which leaped beside the open window behind which one made those inevitable concessions to Virgil, Livy, or Homer, which, I am afraid, were deemed the only tiresome part of those glorious years upon the moor. He had a wife of rosy and cheerful countenance and staunch qualities, who, unhampered by family cares, as cook at the rectory devoted her conspicuous talents to serving up in the most alluring forms conceivable the products of farm and dairy. Such butter and clotted cream and small Exmoor mutton may have appeared, no doubt, upon other tables, as unfailingly subsidised with the spoil of gun and rod. Such bread, alas, is no longer baked anywhere!

We were twelve miles, as already noted, from Barnstaple, the nearest town and railroad. Some persons in the parish, both old and young, had never seen a train. An ancient dame comes back to me who, on first encountering one, while taking a long road journey, at the entrance of a tunnel, is said to have described it to the home circle on her return as having 'given a yell at the sight of her, and dashed into its hole.' There were people still living, too, who could remember the first pair of wheels coming into the parish. If the curiosity on things of the past, which gathers with riper years, had been present, what a mine was here! But that is the worst of it, you rarely grasp these privileges till too late. Waterloo veterans, for instance, were in those days thick in the land, but one thought neither more nor less of them than a Frenchman regards the hundreds of men, alive in France to-day, who fought through the great debacle of 1870-1. Yet now one reads these printed memoirs of almost any Waterloo survivor with avidity. Not that there was indifference at the rectory to the archaisms, superstitions, and

humours, of that delightful and secluded parish. On the contrary, our elders took great comfort in it, as well as in the memory of it all in after years, being cultivated men and women of the world, further endowed with the blessed sense of humour, and we shared in the entertainment at any rate. I am sure I did in the later times, both at the instant and in the after recollection. We, all of us, I think, knew nearly every one of the three hundred and odd scattered souls of the parish—farmers, labourers, blacksmith, carpenter, miller, and clerk, of which last portentous functionary a great deal more than a passing word will be said shortly. And as among the three hundred, original characters were naturally numerous, entertainment of this kind was never lacking. The rector's wife, young, clever, and bright-witted, used to bring back from cottage hearths strange beliefs and dark sayings and practices, the oral salvage of unnumbered centuries dropped by the aged crones, which all, alas! have long faded from my memory. I do not think there was a doctor nearer than Barnstaple, nor do I recollect any one at the rectory, save for an accident or two, ever requiring one. In the parish the crones, I think, worked their fearsome kill-or-cures upon the infants and the aged, who alone probably required much medical aid in that surpassingly salubrious clime. I well remember, however, the lady above mentioned arriving just in time to prevent an ailing infant being slain outright, as she naturally assumed, by a dose of No. 1 shot, mixed with honey, to facilitate its downward path. Perhaps she was wrong, and Exmoor babies had inherited a capacity for swallowing charges of shot without being incommoded by them, as was the Welsh parson in an early page of this book. They were fine folk, however, in that wild parish, tall and lusty, frank, simple, friendly, loyal, and without guile, and this I would affirm on better authority than my own youth-

ful and irresponsible association with them. But the pony-riding Exmoor farmers are, I think, well known for their admirable qualities, and the labourers, if dismounted, were of the same stock. Pretty nearly all of both were Ridds, Dallyns, Huxtables, Piles, and Muxworthys. There were no lay gentry in that part of the world. Mr. Knight owned Exmoor, and was not much in residence. The rest of the country belonged to a distinguished and worthy peer, who used occasionally to ride over and survey our corner of his domain, share our midday dinner, and go off with the rector to view, let us hope with remorseful eye, some of the most ramshackle cottages that ever disfigured a great estate, for sanitary inspectors, I fancy, were not yet.

Agriculture, however, was at its zenith. Prices were high, rents were high, and the world outside Britain was either at war or emerging from wars, unsettled in government, or industrially handicapped by mediæval customs. Ocean transport was in its infancy, and England was the spoiled child of fortune. Free Trade mattered nothing when there were no rivals. But the farm labourer had been left out of all this, and he was a better man all round than his present-day successor. No one could possibly hold that he got his reasonable share, though wages were rather higher in North Devon than in Wiltshire, the men in our parish earning the munificent sum of eleven shillings a week. Behind us, to the eastward, the moor rose high with its billowy tops, and rolled away into eternity so far as we were concerned. The mystery and suggestiveness of the winter moonlight on the moor at that time of life abides with me. To the westward, on the line of our road towards Barnstaple and civilisation, lay a high, bleak country that had once been moor, but was now reclaimed and enclosed with banks planted with beech saplings. The far side of this broad wind-swept plateau, which walled us off from the

lower world, trended down through many miles of broken country, furrowed by short-coursed streams, to the sea. Our own rivers and brooks ran more or less southward and inland, making long journeys: some to find their way back ultimately to the north coast and the Severn sea, others to swell the Exe and join the English Channel amid other scenes and other climes sixty miles away. The snow on these uplands had been phenomenal in (I think) 1860, the high fences were entirely buried, and the farmers drove to Barnstaple over the frozen surface above their tops. It may have been this long-remembered winter that inspired Mr. Blackmore to his famous description of the snowstorm in *Lorna Doone*. For some of the Blackmores lived in that very bit of country, and were neighbours of ours, as such things there counted. Of these last there might be reckoned perhaps half a dozen within eight or nine miles away, clerics in almost every case, and men of character and standing. An interchange of visits in that country in those days meant spending the day. We sometimes went in force, a party of five perhaps, and no one was happier than the rector driving his pair, and occasionally his three horses, over sometimes rather fearsome byways. The game-diary hung over the dining-room chimneypiece in the form of a large sheet of cardboard criss-crossed with the days of the months, and headed with the different varieties of bird and beast that yielded their constant tribute. It began with black game, and went on through partridges, pheasants, woodcock, snipe, landrail, golden plover, duck, hares, and rabbits to wood pigeons. There was no abundance of any of these items, for magpies, crows, and vermin flourished, but in their various times and seasons there was enough of everything on so large and varied a beat to keep us busy from September to February. We shot nearly every afternoon, quite regardless of the weather, and about once a week for

a whole day, when the rector himself turned out. Five thousand acres of rough shooting, including a good deal of rabbiting, will provide two or even three guns at an age content with small things, and regardless of effort, nay, almost greedy for it, with an almost continuous employment.

We learned a great deal more, however, than the mere habits of game, and how to circumvent and shoot it without the assistance and the paraphernalia that hovers about the average lad through all his apprenticeship—more in these days than in those—and checks initiative. We got knowing and interested in all birds and beasts, and if not in scientific natural history, we acquired at least an easy matter-of-course intimacy with every ordinary detail of fields, woods, and streams that doesn't come so easily to boys even with country advantages, in the short intervals of their school holidays, with their minds running on many other more gregarious things. And this was a country in a thousand! I am constrained to add that outside the attention demanded by the literature of the ancients, our minds and activities lay wholly in these lines, nor have I ever in my life, for a single moment, regretted that they did so. Later on, at any rate, there was a great deal more than the mere physical delight in such untrammelled liberty and privileges, or in hunting wild things. I think I enjoy Nature to-day as much as most people. But I would give a good deal to feel the influence of scenery quite as keenly as I did at seventeen. One didn't talk about it then. One talks, and sometimes writes, about it now. Boys are not supposed to feel these things, which shows how much their elders know of what is passing in their minds. Perhaps they don't often. Moreover, such precocious susceptibilities are usually looked for in weakly, studious lads. Some reputation for absent-mindedness was not enough, other things considered, to lay me open to such suspicions, and if the

Georgics appealed to me more because one read them at an open window to the music of falling water, the hum of bees, and the harmonious plaints of Exmoor ewes and lambs, I am quite sure none of the company had the remotest idea of it, and I should have blushed myself to admit even so much. But nevertheless the whole atmosphere of that country had a sort of magnetic effect upon my youth. Whether it was a blinding mist upon the moor, or a vista of sunlit rapid among the woods, its influence was such a powerful and abiding one, I couldn't attempt to estimate its lifelong effect.

There were not very many books in the rectory, though its adult occupants were readers, but a parcel from Mudie's found its way into the wilderness at stated intervals. There was, in truth, between the call of the study and the call of the wild not much time for reading. But an admirable large print edition of the Waverley novels was ranged upon one side of the game-list and the then new volumes of Macaulay's *History* upon the other. This last I devoured with avidity from cover to cover, and read the novels through, many of them twice, from *Waverley* to the *Highland Widow*, with equal relish, while *Westward Ho!* was, of course, a local classic. I had pocket editions, which are still in my possession, of my favourite poets—Thomson, Scott, and Shelley, which I sometimes read privily, and neither the Waverleys nor the poets lost anything in the quiet of that beautiful and lonely country. There was practically no cheap trash in those days to fuddle the brains of such as hadn't many, and tempt those better endowed to mental debauchery. There were no picture-magazines of the 'bright, snappy, and up-to-date' species that, clad in garish raiment, cater for the passing amusement of the weak-headed, and half-educated. The *Field*, which arrived on Tuesday, taking three days to reach us, was the literary event of the week, which, however, was quite as it should be.

For our post came only thrice a week, to wit, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, conveyed on the back of an old man across the hills from Paracombe, five miles away. During a deep snow, or when the streams were in flood, he didn't come at all. But if nothing interfered, he reached the rectory at eleven, and having there delivered himself of the main part of his burden, including the *Times*, for the two preceding days, he thence proceeded, with perhaps half a dozen letters, to the village, a ten minutes' walk. Everybody then sat down and scratched away for their lives, for the old man returned in less than half an hour to a brief repast of bread and cheese and beer in the kitchen; after which he started away again, with his bag and staff, to catch, I think, the passing coach at Paracombe, which bore our missives into the outer world.

I can still see the rector's temporarily furrowed brow as, at his standing desk, he tackled what must have been sometimes, in his case, a breathless task, for he had a quite extensive private connection, and as a parson active in parish improvements, no slight business correspondence. We received the world's events of Saturday upon a Tuesday. If our anxious parents, though none had less cause to be anxious, happened to write on that day demanding some immediate documentary evidence that we were alive and sound, they would have had to bottle up their suspense for a good long time. Moreover, it occasionally happened that a mail-day broke more than ordinarily propitious for fishing, and the state of the river below the house suggested that the Barle away on the moor would be just fining down after a spate, and if a general transfer of the entire household to Simonsbath was resolved upon the correspondence had to go by the board. In short, we were probably in much the same postal relation with friends in the next county but one as most people are now with St. Petersburg,

except that in the latter case they have a telegraph, and we had none. And no one in those days, short of a life-and-death matter, would have ventured to wire to any one twelve miles from an office.

I have alluded already, and with all due significance, to the parish clerk. I have encountered a fair number of this now extinct genus, and have also read Mr. Ditchfield's interesting book on the species, yet I am firmly convinced that old Isaac, for all such characteristics as distinguished that unique profession, had few, if any, equals, and no superior in Great Britain. Isaac was a legacy from the late rector, or rather he represented in its fullest autocratic sense a time-honoured office against which that apathetic soul had not even attempted to struggle. Our rector, as may have been gathered, was a strong man and a highly qualified one. Though then quite young, he weighed, I think, fourteen stone, and had no superfluous flesh. Isaac was about five feet three, of which his really striking billiard-ball head was far the most noticeable portion. The rector was a trained musician, so much so as to take an active part and, I think, sometimes to supervise those combined choral festivals in which North Devon took an early interest. Isaac was an enthusiastic musician with, I believe, for his condition and antecedents, which were from infancy those of a single parish, a good deal of self-taught technical knowledge, but he preferred to hear himself sing and play without assistance or other disturbing accessories.

His voice was a slightly husky and by no means powerful bass, delivered with a delicious Devonshire accent. His sole instrument was the flute. The rector had found him in absolute possession of the church music, not merely as to the selection of the chants and tunes, but also of the metrical Tate and Brady psalms, which in all primitive

places still took the place of hymns. In spite of the rector's peculiar qualifications for shattering this monopoly at one fell stroke, and the further fact that the mute sympathy of the parish, so far as it had any will-power in such matters, would have been unanimously with him, this monstrous monopoly succeeded in defying him for four or five years, and I am thankful to say was in its fullest glory for at least one of those in which I sat in the rectory pew. The vested interests of the old-time clerk were, of course, traditionally great, but very seldom, I should think, has one held the praise department of a church service in the hollow of his hand more completely, and executed it so ingenuously as this gloriously quaint person. But the rector was a humane man, and it was felt that forcible deposition, the only possible move, would probably kill the old fellow, who set great store by his dignity in the parish of which he was also schoolmaster, self-elected and of quasi-private venture, I fancy. For the regular schools under official and rectorial auspices were then only in contemplation, and it was another terrible blow to this poor village Solon when they actually arose and he was superseded by a certificated mistress from up the country. Other circumstances, too, combined to prolong the musical monopoly of Isaac in the church, which matter nothing here.

The church itself, Norman, I believe, in origin, stood upon the summit of a bare wind-swept hill, half a mile down the valley from the rectory, and a mile from the little village. Below it, by the river, stood the mill and the old house wherein Isaac cobbled shoes and played the flute, dabbled in theology and even a little in science as well as in music, and above all taught his school. The antiquity of its tower did not prevent the interior of the church, with its plain deal pews, from presenting as unrelieved a spectacle of whitewashed nakedness as I have ever seen. No touch

of colour, no memorial tablet even, broke the monotony of wall or window.

On each side of the little chancel were the usual two pews. Those on the north side were occupied by Isaac and his musicians, those on the south by the rectory folks, so these last were face to face with the orchestra across an aisle perhaps five feet wide. If there were strangers present unprepared for the performance, they had to sit it out and keep a straight face as best they could. There was no escape, and no scrap of cover behind which to hide their confusion. And a good many guests in the course of the year did have to face the music, nor did any one of them in those days of the old régime ever forget it or, if yet alive, are likely to fail in remembrance of their first experience on Sunday morning. And this is what they saw, for what they heard is, of course, one of those precious things that must of necessity go down unrecorded into the night of time.

I can shut my eyes at this moment and still hear every note of that matchless choir; but then I heard and saw it for Sabbaths innumerable. At the end of the short front pew above the chancel steps, in full view of the congregation, and dominating it, actually and morally, was Isaac. I have noted his lack of inches, for which his head and carriage much more than compensated. The former had reached the billiard-ball stage by the time I knew him, and shone with an ever-brightening sheen on Sundays, as he added a fresh touch of polish to it, with a big red handkerchief, on resuming his seat at the conclusion of each burst of melody. At the point of his expansive brow were high arched eyebrows, feathered at the tips, and surmounting a pair of large brown eyes, which rolled easily but anxiously around the church, without much disturbance of the head, or of the great little man's attitude for the moment. A

short face, but long upper lip, a fringe of whiskers from ear to ear underneath the chin, a woollen scarf knotted round the neck, over which a remnant of black hair fell and curled patriarchally upward, complete an inadequate picture. For the face was not in the least of the mangel-wurzel, truculent type, but almost meek in aspect; and though the whole figure of the little man, in his character of autocrat, was irresistibly comic, his expression betokened intellectuality trammelled by the most untoward limitations. Indeed, there was something almost of pathos in it, coupled, however, with quiet self-assertion, and a gently protesting obstinacy. If he had been of the truculent type, the rector would have downed him in his first year. But the resistance of Isaac was much more subtle and formidable, for if it goaded the rector almost beyond endurance one day, the situation appealed to his compassion on the next. The end, of course, had to come some time, and seemed fraught with the shadow of an impending tragedy, though the parish at large, having utterly lost the musical sense, would be assuredly indifferent spectators. I witnessed the revolution myself, and it was far less bloody than anticipated, but infinitely pathetic. So when wide-eyed visitors came, generally friends or relatives of the rector, and went to church for the first time, they marvelled at such a man as he, after three or four years of office, still taking a back seat in the musical department, and meekly contributing from the reading-desk a soft but accurate tenor part to the portentous caricature conducted by Isaac and his offspring. But, of course, they didn't know everything, and the rector merely laughed and bided his time. Visitors who had been once, often dreaded the next service; the joy was altogether too fearful for the composure of some people, and the second entertainment of this kind is generally worse to bear than the first. I myself witnessed the diverse ways in which so

many various persons struggled to bear up under what must have been a shock to the most phlegmatic.

Isaac was supported, and alone supported, by his three sons, when he could collect them all. When he couldn't, he sang the service through with one of them, the Joseph of the family, a youth with scarlet hair and heavily freckled face, who piped a metallic alto. The next one above had just achieved a rather husky tenor voice, and was of the primitive Hogarthian peasant type, and a sucking bricklayer by profession. Not a scrap of his father's intelligence illuminated his bucolic countenance, but, like his sire, he could roll his eyes without shifting his head to some purpose. But his purpose was quite unofficial, and concerned only, I am afraid, the girls at the other end of the church. The eldest son, a stonemason, sat at the end of the pew, and when present supplied the instrumental music, which was a flute. All three sons, like their sire, were very short of stature, and if in other respects they were a weird company, they were, at any rate, in this one a singularly level lot. When the trio lifted up their voices to the shrilling of the flute, and, in the rich vernacular, sang through the *Venite* in that otherwise silent and echoing church, it was a performance that I have said no unaccustomed wight could readily have held out against.

Nobody in the nave opened their mouths. The congregation was regular in attendance, respectable in numbers, admirable in deportment, and reasonably audible in the responses, led, of course, in trumpet tones by Isaac. But the art of joining him in praise had obviously never been acquired, or else long ago abandoned in despair as too much for them. It was too much for many more skilful people who spasmodically attempted it. There were no books of tunes. Sometimes this family trio, in their zeal for music, would be singing the three accessory parts, the flute alone

wheezing out the air, till, grasping the situation, the venerable bass would deny himself, and swing back into the melody The mute faces of the congregation during these interludes of song were a study. They expressed no shadow of interest, nor of approval, nor yet of disapproval, and no lips moved. There was just a blank. Isaac would have secretly resented, I am quite sure, any congregational assistance. He sang for them, at them, and to them, and had paralysed ages before any tentative growls or chirrups from callow amateurs in the nave. A lady sang gently betimes in the rectory pew, but the music, as she said, was too elaborate. It is no doubt an impious admission, but for myself I have never so heartily enjoyed any church service since. I confronted Isaac at a five-foot range for some three years, on and off, both in the days of his glory and in those, for him, sadder ones of partial dethronement. The first period was, of course, for the spectator, far the most inspiring. When greatly wrought up by the heartsome stanzas in a 'Tate and Brady,' or by the swing of a favourite chant, he would sway from side to side, and wag his head, rolling his eyes in the meantime around nave and chancel, and even roof, as if to gather in the mead of approbation that in truth only a most lively fancy could have detected. Oftentimes, too, he would beat time with a hobnailed boot upon the stone floor, thereby contributing quite a novel element to the already untoward combination. And of all the Tate and Brady compositions, I always myself hailed with joy the announcement of one, in which occurred the inspiring couplet :—

> 'O let them shout and sing,
> With joy and pious mirth.'

For Isaac then let himself go, and illustrated the exaltation suggested in the text with redoubled and resounding

fervour. He invariably scrutinised any stranger in the rectory pew with furtive curiosity, and sang at them, as it were, with the scarcely disguised intention of showing off, a practice which made him all the harder for them to bear. They rarely accepted the challenge, however, even if musically inclined; they couldn't. But there was one occasional visitor, a near relative of the rector, then reading for Orders, who took a wholly different course, and one altogether disconcerting for the bystander who understood what was going forward. This young man was possessed of much skill in church music, of a clear and penetrating tenor voice, combined with exuberant spirits and a highly developed sense of humour. On his appearance in church Isaac always manifested uneasiness, casting half-defiant looks across the aisle, and preparing for a life-and-death struggle to save himself and company from being wiped out, flute and all. The contest began with the first verse of the *Venite*, and continued through both morning and afternoon service. The sound of battle then rolled all down the nave, and its mute throng of worshippers dumbly felt that something unusual was up, and craned their necks and turned their heads about in most unwonted fashion. The Cantab was imperturbable. Any tune, the most archaic melody, came easy enough to him, or if it didn't, his bell-like tenor overleaped any minor difficulties. Isaac, in the meantime, sang and swayed and rolled his eyes back and forth towards his rival, and round and round, and lifted up his not overpowerful voice to its uttermost bounds. The young bricklayer backed up his father loyally till the veins swelled in his forehead, but his husky tenor was of small avail. The red-haired alto piped in vain, and the stonemason's efforts to keep the family in their rightful place only served to force the flute into more bronchial agonies.

The hush and reaction were awful when the Amen died away and we sat down again, Isaac mopping the top of his head, and the Cantab, cool and unconcerned, and affecting innocence of offence, well knowing that the contest would begin again immediately, while the rectory pew preserved its decorum to the best of its ability. I met the author of these thrilling occasions some quarter of a century later, by that time a grey-haired vicar, at a large gathering at Marlborough. He fairly shouted for joy at their memory, and then and there, in the school court, gave an impromptu musical character-sketch of the unforgettable and inimitable Isaac in the throes of the contest, to the amazement of a crowd of small boys who, no doubt, suspected that the gatherings of veterans, which was being celebrated, had been too much for the ballast of one at least of them.

The inevitable dethronement of Isaac came at last. Schools were built, and a certificated mistress arrived, who played the harmonium, now introduced into the church. A scanty choir was found with the utmost difficulty, so musically fallow had the parish lain under the withering dispensation of the autocrat. He kept his old place, however, and led the responses, and indeed the singing too, though no longer dictator of its repertoire. His intrinsic virtues never, perhaps, shone so brightly as in his downfall, which was accepted with a resignation and humility that was quite pathetic, and far more than outweighed his overweening estimate of the vocal powers of himself and his tenor son David, which never flagged. This indeed was sublime, even to the point of exasperation, among those who were only too glad to let bygones be bygones, and there was really a good deal to forget from the official rectory point of view. So, later on, when the laboriously prepared little choir made its first appearance in public and journeyed uphill and down dale to take its humble part in a great

choral festival at Barnstaple, it was hoped that Isaac's sense of proportion in such things would be rudely and finally adjusted. For some professional vocalists of note from London were to sing the solos, and for any purpose that matters here this prince of parish clerks had never been outside the parish in his life. It was of no use, however. Though not myself in those parts at the time, I have heard often at first hand what he said to those who lost not a moment in ascertaining the effect of what was fondly hoped would be a paralysing shock to his unparalleled complacency. I dare not trust myself to record his exact words, but it may be accepted as the simple truth that he admitted no particle of superiority to himself in the eminent vocalists from London, and in such sublime and picturesque faith he, in due course, no doubt, joined the great majority. I saw quite a little of Isaac at one time at very close quarters, from the fact that I sought instruction from him on the flute, an instrument which I don't think I in the least wanted to learn, for the mere privilege of listening to his wingèd words. So it came about that I used to descend the valley periodically in dark winter nights, by a slippery riverside path, to these engagements, which took place in a corner of the old deserted schoolroom, where the dethroned dominie still instructed one or two more ambitious youths in comparatively advanced mathematics. Here, with his well-worn music spread out upon his shoe-bench, beneath the light of two tallow dips, the old clerk played tune after tune upon the flute, carried away by his real passion for music and delight in his own execution, and in happy oblivion of the little business side of the undertaking. It was enough for me to sit and watch this great and worthy little man, and in the interludes to gather pearls from his lips. And while talking of flutes, I omitted one of the most disconcerting features for the outsider in the old order of

things in the church. For when the flute-playing son was not available, the old man himself kept the instrument beside him, and, before rising to sing, blew loud and firmly upon it the opening note, which, catching up with his own voice while he replaced the flute, he carried it forward into the burst of melody which broke from the trio when they got upon their legs. I remained to see two, if not three, choirs unite their forces in a harvest-home service in that hilltop church, and some of the old people whom Isaac had dominated all his life thought earth could now contain no more surprises. What is more, and my sole achievement in such a situation, I sang tenor in our choir on that great occasion, an effort, however, of complete supererogation, as circumstances placed me immediately between the accomplished Cantab already mentioned, who was down for the occasion, and the great David ap Isaac himself. The old rivalry was not dead, the occasion was stimulating, and I felt as one firing off pistol-shots amid the crashing of heavy artillery.

Various undistinguished, but sometimes excellent, packs of hounds used to come and draw our big wood for a fox, or hunt our hares, which ran like antelopes across the moor and its skirts. Mr. Rowe from Lynton, with foxhounds, was one such visitor ; Mr. Smith, a tanner, I think, at South Molton, with an admirable pack of harriers, was another ; and last, though not least, the Rev. John Russell, with a very scratch pack of foxhounds from Swymbridge. On these occasions, if taken by surprise, which was not unlikely, there was a stampede for the stable. There was no ringing or shouting for a groom or coachman. The ex-militiaman and his henchman might be anywhere pulling turnips, or clearing out a drain, and not to be competent to saddle up or harness horses in that establishment was accounted a disgrace that no one could long endure. There were gener-

ally mounts for three, including the rector, and with a little notice, which occasionally happened, some neighbouring farmer could be relied upon to supply an extra nag. I don't remember Mr. Snow of Oare ever bringing his hounds our way, though once we went to meet him somewhere in the direction of Lynton. It was on that occasion, I think, being about Easter time, we beheld, to our amazement, Dr. Ridding, the headmaster of Winchester, striding across the moor with a friend, in the direction of the Badgeworthy Valley. The rector, being very Wykamistically connected, had some acquaintance with him, and the mutual recognition in that then outlandish spot was hailed as a coincidence.

'Where on earth are you going?' said the rector. (Tourists on Exmoor were not yet.)

'I am going to the Doone Valley, of course,' said the other, 'and I have no doubt you can put me on the right track.'

'Doone Valley!' said the rector, 'never heard of such a place.'

'Good heavens!' said the future bishop. 'And I suppose you 've never heard of this,' pulling a book out of his pocket, and brandishing it aloft. 'I suppose you 've never heard of Lorna Doone.'

The rector looked at me, for, as a matter of fact, I was down on a visit from Cambridge, and might conceivably have heard later news, in spite of the daily post that had by then been achieved. But it was no use; we knew nothing about Lorna Doone, or any Blackmore, except a slightly eccentric old parson who lived down the Bray Valley.

'Why,' said the doctor, 'all England 's ringing with it!' There was nothing more to be said, of course, and the great man went on his way, perhaps to expatiate to his companion on the belated condition of country life, and possibly to recall the classic tale of the old lady in Exmoor, or Dart-

moor, or North Wales, or in the Cheviots, or half a dozen other places, who greeted the Restoration with the remark of, 'Well, the old king 's dead at last, then.' I don't believe any local had ever heard of the Doone Valley till Mr. Blackmore wrote his famous book, and made Exmoor known to the outer world. Every one knew the Badgeworthy Water, of course, but I fancy he is sponsor for the other. Antiquaries may have known of the Doones. I am quite sure no one in our parish had ever heard of them. After all, they are not worthy of Exmoor, and are but poor things compared to the heroes with which every hill and valley across the Severn Sea so eloquently speak.

In truth the historical appeal of Exmoor is slight enough. Its fascination is otherwise, and not a little, I am quite sure, like that of Dartmoor, for its unexpectedness in such a situation amid a soft southern country. If either of them were dropped into Wales, or the north of England, the Londoner would have heard little of them. Exmoor was not the fashion forty odd years ago. I well remember that none of my Cambridge acquaintances had ever even heard of it. The staghounds were not visited in the sixties by anything approaching the number of sportsmen that now follow them, or of the tourists who now crowd to their meets. Dartmoor was, I think, rather better known. But in July 1866 I walked for some days on it, and scarcely met a soul, while throughout a whole August, four years later, spent at Holne, I have no recollection of meeting any strangers to speak of between that place and Princeton.

But if Exmoor may claim some share in that superb seacoast which runs from Barnstaple Bay to Lynton, and beyond, then indeed no pen can riot too extravagantly, and if there is any bit of England, Cornwall included, that opens to the sea in such manner, and through such a gate as the Lyn Valley, I should like to hear of it. And yet in

some ways the most imposing prospect of the North Devon coast is from the opposite shore of Glamorgan, as at that distance the great height of the cliffs is blended with the still loftier hills that spring immediately above them, forming, as it were, a continuous sea wall of really noble altitude.

At pretty regular intervals through the summer and early autumn, the word went forth at the rectory breakfast-table that the move of the day was seaward. Then away we all went in the fresh of the morning, with a hamper in the wagonette, and the rector on the box with the reins, as happy as a king, with his young wife by his side, and the prospect of a swim before him. Sometimes we headed for Ilfracombe, which was about seventeen miles; more often, however, for Combmartin or the Hunter's Inn, in the deep gorge of Headonsmouth, which were both much nearer. Occasionally we took the rough moorland road for Lynton, and pitched down the valley of the West Lyn, or if a guest from 'up country' was in the carriage, went round perhaps by Brendon and thence descended the most formidable hill in England, sometimes, I fancy, if the passenger were a lady, just to see whether she would scream! Bathing off the rocks was a simple and primitive matter in those days anywhere east of Ilfracombe, though a little intimidating in lumpy weather to any but a strong swimmer like the rector.

I don't think the Rev. John Russell was known outside Devonshire till later than this, and quite near the close of his life. He was an old friend of the rector's, who, indeed, afterwards succeeded him, though of a younger generation. On one occasion of his coming over to hunt our hares, the old gentleman espied us from the high road, which ran but a few yards from the house, and about level with the roof, at our more serious avocations within-doors. He was soon

down the bank with his hounds and at the window cracking his whip, and had us out in no time, when there was the usual 'mounting in hot haste.' He usually came up by himself with a young man, who whipped-in for him. Our people thought he had a very scratch lot of hounds, and I do not remember his showing sport in our country, but I see his biography rates them otherwise. Old Bishop Phillpotts was at the end of his tether then, and was very easy with him, but his reverence had a bit of a breeze, I think, with Temple, whose appointment to Exeter I well remember. For, nurtured as I had been in high regard for him as the head-master of Rugby, and my father's friend, it seemed odd to hear him held up to obloquy in every neighbouring parsonage. But then I was not much concerned with *Essays and Reviews*. Every one knows, however, that the new bishop soon conquered these terrors, and became extremely popular, and, as a matter of fact, our rector in after years became one of his staunchest supporters in North Devon. 'Jack' Russell was, of course, essentially a hunting parson, not merely a parson who hunted, but, unlike some of the former, was of eminently decorous habit. Any one may read his life, and all the stories about him therein contained. I can recall him vividly as a well set up old gentleman, good to look upon, both on and off his horse, and with a cheery manner attractive to youth. I used to hear, too, a good many first-hand stories about him. The curate (not a sporting one), who was with him for a great many years in his later period, told me himself, while sitting in the then recently deceased sportsman's former dining-room, that if Mr. Russell came in from a long day's hunting but a few minutes' late for his dinner-hour, he always went straight to bed without touching anything. One excellent story I had on equally good authority. An old clerical friend, a squarson of similar predilections, and of a well-known

Devonshire family, had recently died, and, at the request of the son, Mr. Russell had ridden over not long afterwards to occupy his late friend's pulpit. Having delivered his discourse, and closed it with a suitable eulogy on its departed occupant, he was surprised beyond measure, being some way from home, at not being invited to lunch by the son, whom he had known from the cradle. Pondering on this strange behaviour, he rode off home, and on the next morning received a letter from the young man, expressing his deep pain and displeasure that Mr. Russell should have had so little respect for his father's memory as to preach one of his father's sermons in his own pulpit within a month of his death. The rector of Swymbridge-cum-Landkey—as he then was—laughed loud and long, and sitting down wrote something after this kind to the ingenuous orphan :—'Dear C——,—You young this-that-and-the-other, if you look up So-and-so (mentioning some classic fount of pulpit oratory), page such-and-such, you will find the identical sermon which your dear father and I have each of us preached, I dare say, a score of times in our lives.' So the breach was healed. A very old friend of mine, then a young vicar, with strong convictions as to parochial duties, was hospitably urged upon one occasion by Mr. Russell, who knew him well, and was fond of him, to come and spend a week and bring over his wife. 'What will my people do ?' protested the other, laughing. 'Why, hang it, H——, if you and D—— (his wife) *must* visit people, you can visit *mine* to your heart's content. So that 's a bargain,' said the old gentleman. It is no reflection on the old sportsman's memory to remark that the running of a parish in any such sense of the word was outside his scheme of life, and my friend's point of view was merely regarded as an amiable mania. The sins of omission were freely forgiven the old sporting parson by the uncritical laymen, if he didn't mis-

behave himself otherwise, and sometimes even if he did, partly perhaps because the duties of a country parson are things of such elastic conception to most of them.

That delightful and secluded trouting stream, the Bray, as already mentioned, ran through and out of the parish, twisting between steep hills clad in oak woods, or gorse or bracken, and fringed by narrow meadows kept ever green and fresh by bubbling rills. Sometimes it described fantastic loops upon these green carpets, forming deep pools at the sharp corners where, among the smaller fry, trout of relatively fabulous dimensions were always awaiting our assiduous endeavours, and at intervals rewarded some fortunate member of our little company, and made a hero of him for a week. It flowed under ivy-clad bridges. It raced between avenues of ash and alder. It swished beneath woody banks ablaze in the spring with primrose and violet, anemone and celandine, campion and bluebell, and thence rolled ever onward into other such alluring and sequestered vales beyond the liberal orbit of our privileges. For four or five miles of that enchanting stream we had absolutely to ourselves, and indeed I doubt if, in those days, and so far from the haunts of men in a thinly peopled country, any sportsman would have ventured so far afield to dispute them. We marked the nests of every bird that haunts the brook —the dipper, the sandpiper, the rail, the kingfisher, and the various wagtails, and on the rare off-days raided such crows and magpies' nests as we could find, and reach in the woods in the interest of our next year's modest and widescattered partridge crop, and still scantier store of wild-bred pheasants. But the great days were those long ones, when we drove over the moor in the morning to the headwaters of the Barle, and fished down the many miles of the wild solitary valley to Simonsbath, the village capital of Exmoor Forest. Here again we had great stretches of

practically virgin water, and indeed the wilder end of our big parish, where the black game were, reached nearly to the Barle. No strangers ever came up there to fish in those days. Indeed, Mr. Knight, I think, preserved it against outsiders, and there were no locals but the parson at Simonsbath, to whom a rod was almost as necessary an article of equipment to his solitude as a surplice. In many a long day, scattered over several years, I do not remember meeting a single angler on the Barle between Simonsbath and its source, a primitive state of blessedness that no doubt has long passed away.

Mr. Knight, afterwards Sir Frederick, was then the owner of Exmoor Forest, upon which our parish marched, and for brief periods occupied the quaint old manor-house standing flush with the road in the remote village of Simonsbath. The drear shell of an unfinished substitute, since, I believe, removed, then reared itself behind, relic of the eccentric enterprises of the squire's father, who left traces all over the moor of his sanguine, impracticable schemes. Black cavernous tunnels gaped at you in remote valleys, where iron or copper ore had been unprofitably wooed. New farm-houses stood high up here and there upon the waste, forlorn and unoccupied, built, I believe, to attract tenants from Scotland, who were to make the desert bloom, but were not to be thus cajoled by an amateur enthusiast. The fountain springs of the Barle, too, in the wild valley of its birth, were dammed up into a deep and gloomy tarn, covering, in those days, several acres, but for what original purpose I forget. This was known as Pinkerry Pond. Near its shores our villagers cut their peats, and there the rectory turf, our principal fuel, was harvested.

The rustics had it that old Mr. Knight had plugged up the outlet of the lake by a big stone, with a view to emptying it periodically, but that the weight of water defeated his

object. They had peopled its black depths with uncanny creatures so effectively, and its gruesomeness was so marked, that the first occasion I ever ventured a swim in it proved to be the last. The then late Mr. Knight and his futile enterprises were still common talk among the moor folk. His son, the squire, was very kind to us, not only in the matter of fishing, but more than once invited us to shoot over his better keepered domain, and to the hospitalities of the old manor-house at Simonsbath. He, or his father, had virtually banished the native Exmoor sheep from the twenty odd thousand acres representing the Old Forest, which he owned. They could not import Scottish tenants by force, but Scottish sheep at least could offer no resistance. I forget exactly how these matters stood in my boyhood, but a dozen years later, on a visit to Simonsbath, I found the Forest virtually a Scottish colony, carrying over ten thousand black-faced and Cheviot sheep, and the little village consisting mainly of Scottish shepherds.

The years I write of were those of the passing of the muzzle-loader, and what a relief its successor was, above all, in that high wet country! For save in the big snows which practically shut us up altogether, no regard whatever was paid to weather, and in the driving storms of those high altitudes, miss-fires became quite early in the day the rule rather than the exception. And then the cleaning of a muzzle-loader! Who that used and looked after one can ever forget those fearsome operations. The pail of blackened odorous water, pumped laboriously up and down the barrels, the winding and unwinding of unaccommodating tow on the cleaning rod, the drying of the inside of the barrels, with their quite unknown possibilities as to rust, the clearing out of the nipples, and the general oiling inside and out afterwards. These things were good discipline, I fancy, for the young sportsman. So was the muzzle-

loader in the field itself, passing in due course from the single to the double barrel. There were so many things to be remembered, it made a youngster careful generally, and also less inclined to random firing. Hundreds of ramrods, being of necessity of slender build, I am quite sure, were broken annually in England by choleric souls, not always boys, upon the backs of unruly spaniels and retrievers, when the situation became awkward. Yet what weapons were those first pin-fire guns, with which the rectory of that day, like other folks, though, of course, a little later than some, armed itself, the big hammers rearing up at such an angle that a kicking gun, thrown up and fired carelessly at a snapshot, would split your nose open, as I have seen actually happen to an expert sportsman? The home-loaded cartridges, of course, constantly jammed at a critical moment, and a brass hook to haul them out was part of the gun's equipment. Still, even those first breechloaders were an immense improvement, though there were plenty of stalwarts who maintained that they had not the penetration of the muzzle-loader, and in any case swore by all their gods that they would never use them.

I remember, on one occasion, during the seventies, while crossing from New York to Liverpool, a heated discussion arose between several Englishmen in the smoking-room, on some technicalities concerning the make of various guns. 'Well,' said an oracular and rather cocksure sportsman, 'I am quite sure that Tolley's guns are not built that way,' whereupon a quiet little man in the corner, who had taken no part in this, or in any other conversation during the voyage, interposed an objection. At this the surprised orator whirled round on him with a 'Who the devil are you?' sort of air, in which our nation rather excel, and then put the query rather less curtly into words.

'I,' said the little man, '*am* Tolley.'

And so he was.

A pair or two of eagles (ospreys), in those days still occasionally haunted the inaccessible cliffs around Headonsmouth, and used at long intervals to cause some excitement by sailing high in air over the rectory towards the moor. I shudder to think how nearly I once succeeded in at least maiming one of these noble birds. It lit on the lonely ridge of Shrowsborough, and quivering in every limb with excitement, I crawled up a gully, gun, it is needless to add, in hand, to within seventy or eighty yards of the great beast, nobly outlined against the sky, and still apparently unsuspicious of my presence and brutal intentions, happily futile though they proved. But the spectacle at such close quarters in that place was worth the fruitless stalk.

But it did not always rain on Exmoor. There were radiant weeks in summer when the shrunken streams piped faintly amid the lush oak woods, or slipped almost noiselessly by the haymakers in the narrow meadow strips: when the brown, rushing Barle faded to the colour of pale sherry, and babbled feebly in its rocky bed, and the loud wild call of the nesting curlew rang through the brooding heat haze which enwrapped the moor. There were sunny, windless October days, too, on the high ridges, when the gossamer weaved its fine network over the heather and the peat-hags, and even a wily old blackcock could occasionally be still caught napping. And what an outlook it was from that roof-tree of our little world, as the sun dipped behind Barnstaple Bay and the Morte and Lundy Island, and far away across the shining sea the hills and mountains of Glamorgan and Gower waved in long procession towards the dim shadowy capes of Pembroke. Nor from anywhere, I think, does Dartmoor stand out so finely as when seen in grey heaped up masses from the sister moor across the thirty miles of luxuriant undulations which divide them.

CHAPTER VI

EAST LOTHIAN IN THE 'ROARING SEVENTIES'

ONLY a small minority of people now living are old enough to appreciate the prodigious economic contrast between the rural England of to-day and that of the early seventies. In this trade-ridden country only a minority again of this proportion are in a position to grasp the full sense of the cleavage that separates those times from these in everything associated with the landed interest. An entire generation has now grown so accustomed to regard the squire, the parson, and the large farmer as objects to be condoled with on the one hand, and on the other to be cursed and taxed out of existence according to political faith, that the blessed calm and proud serenity of former days seem now like a dream. It is idle to talk to the average man in the street, or even in a country road, if he is much under fifty, about these things. He may believe you, and indeed has probably heard often enough that land in East Anglia and elsewhere, now fetching 10s., formerly let easily for 30s., and that over most of England the slump has been only less in varying degrees.

Mere statements of fact, however, do not help much. It is not the mere difference in the letting and selling value of farm land between to-day and the close of the old régime, as one may unreservedly style it, but the infinite contrast in the atmosphere. Everything associated with British land in the sixties and seventies was the very sign and

symbol of eternal solidity, with prices to match. Markets might fluctuate, harvests be lean or abundant, tenants prosper or fail, all these things were merely natural and temporary. They didn't affect the situation, the serene, secure composure of an English countryside, its immutability, its eternal two-and-three-quarters per cent. on current values and thirty years' purchase—the envy and admiration of a then distracted world. British land had neither commercial rivals abroad nor political enemies at home, of any seeming consequence. The former had not yet developed, the latter were but a despised handful of faddists. In short, the upper and middle classes still ruled, and few dreamed that in Old England the tail would ever come to wag the head, much less within the lifetime of those already men and women.

For the recent shifting of a large share of power from the landowners to the leaders of commerce had not really touched land. It had only admitted another educated and capitalist class to privileges hitherto monopolised, a class who had, moreover, been always buying land with its honours and stable revenue whenever they could, and had always honoured and cherished it. Free Trade, never intended as an attack on the British agricultural system, had not yet been really submitted to the test of competition. Nor had we then any conception of what marvels of oversea production and transport would develop at the close of our own century. There were Liberals and Conservatives, to be sure, in those days as in these, and they might differ in many details connected with land tenure; but as regards the superiority over all others of the British landed system, the inviolate character, as it were, of British acres, no one but a few cranks ever raised a question. It was simply a matter of course, and nobody seemed to have the dimmest notion of what was coming. When a new man bought another estate, as, after

all, new men have been doing ever since the days of the Tudors, his notion of ' founding a family ' appeared perfectly natural. There seemed nothing to prevent his descendants from continuing the rôle of beneficent squire, and gathering local prestige with each generation till kingdom come. The *Novus homo* who bought an estate to-day, with a view to ' founding a family ' in that sense, would indeed be a Simple Simon. No such prospect could be contemplated by any sane individual. And just think what a change this alone indicates !

Much of rural England has not altered superficially a particle in the last forty years. The same manor-houses and homesteads, the same cottages, fences, gates, and roads, are all more or less there. One looks perhaps upon the identical landscape one was familiar with forty years ago, and to the eye nothing is changed. Frequently the same families, or their equivalents, are still seated in hall and homestead. But that has nothing to do with it. It isn't a change of people, though that change has been very great, but in the centre of gravity. All the importance, the substance, the power, the serene invulnerable prosperity of old days has gone, or is obviously going, for good or ill. The prestige, as it then existed, not merely that of landowners, but of farmers, as recognised leaders of the world's agriculture, has vanished. The former in the mass have encountered two or three decades of misfortune and qualified commiseration. ' Pity the poor landowner,' has rung in the ears of a whole generation. The new men who have purchased many of these places have no longer, as indicated, even the interest of being potential founders of families. They can be but mere transients whatever delusions some may cherish. Even if in the future the old conditions were possible, the restlessness of individuals themselves makes future permanence of ownership out of the question.

The women alone of to-day and to-morrow would settle that. The sense of such things is dying rapidly.

If the mere landscape detail of rural England is, in the main, unchanged, the atmosphere, to any who knew it in the early seventies, is incredibly so. For the whole point of view is utterly altered, and to a greater extent than could be expressed in a chapter of print. Not more so in one county than another, though one will have suffered far worse economical things than its neighbour in the transformation, for reasons too familiar to waste words over. I don't want to talk politics particularly, as having no strong conviction on this particular point, but when ingenuous souls point to the figures under Free Trade in the sixties and seventies as proving anything, it really is too much. All the outside world that mattered, not then convulsed with wars or revolutions, was preparing for them, or recovering from them. Chief of all, the United States, at the cost of a million lives, was just out of that civil conflict which was to make her subsequently so economically formidable. Other new countries were commercially in embryo. Transportation was in its infancy. Britain, care-free and war-free, and skilled in the arts of peace, dominated the situation, while her landed interest, not yet sensibly threatened by foreign competition, shared automatically in this virtual monopoly. Indeed she seemed stronger economically than ever, since the grievances of the middle class had been removed by the Reform Bill.

Into the inner machinery which, with oiled wheels, kept this land system of Great Britain moving forward upon its serene, complacent, unclouded course, I was first introduced on leaving Cambridge. A couple of years followed that were interesting enough at the time from every point of view, and are scarcely less so in the restrospect. For probably they marked the very zenith of what may be called the

proudest days of British agriculture. Moreover, a present intimacy with about half of rural England and Wales, and a tolerable acquaintance with much of the other half, makes one prize infinitely the memory of a period spent, as it were, in the thick of such things, just before the curtain was rung down upon them, as it proved for ever, to make way after much tribulation, for another epoch.

East Lothian, though in Scotland, might almost have been called the very crown and apex of the structure. Something more than *primus inter pares* among its immediate neighbours, it stood for the greatest glory of British agriculture. No district in England aspired to comparison, or could have done so. Its tenantry, who had made the country what it was, were in the very van of agricultural enterprise on a generous scale. They paid nearly double the rent that, for land of equal natural quality, was paid by Norfolk, Hampshire, or Lincolnshire farmers, and made much the same percentage on their capital. The lairds were men of broad acres and proportionately still greater rent-rolls, for which last they ought to have been deeply thankful, since this exceptional revenue was mainly due to the type of tenant which southern Scotland had by then developed. East Lothian, in short, was then the best farmed country in the world. It is to-day as good as ever, and as much ahead of England, well-farmed as much of England is, as of old, and if there are large farms anywhere in the world even now presenting the spectacle that those of East Lothian afford, it would be interesting to know where to look for them. Mr. Balfour, while pleading recently in the House of Commons for caution in interfering with Scottish land, claimed that, *pace* the declamations of the urban orator against British agriculture in general, his county still held in that respect the first place in the world. Most of his audience probably supposed he was merely indulging

in pardonable hyperbole. He was not, of course. He was merely uttering a truism.

These things were not disputed when I first went to East Lothian, eager to see all there was to be seen of so famous a country from many points of view, and with by that time some general acquaintance with a good many English counties, and a very strong topographical bent. The first morning that for me broke over East Lothian, revealed at a glance, from my bedroom window, about half its bounds, and a good deal outside of them. Arthur's Seat and the Pentlands, with the dim smoke-cloud of Edinburgh, lay twenty miles away across the fat Lothian plain that fringed the Firth of Forth. For thirty or forty miles along the horizon, upon the inland side, rolled the billowy solitudes of the Lammermuirs. Between the moorlands and the shore lay the clear trim undulations of the then world-famous county. Beyond the gradually expanding sea, otherwise the Firth of Forth, for another score or two of miles, ran the level coast and lofty back-lying hills of Fife. The triumphs of agriculture, prosaic, material, if you like, were set nevertheless in a frame that embodied half the romance of Scottish history, and I felt at once that two years or so would pass a great deal too quickly in such a country. And so they did. There was not much time in the tasks and gregarious excitements of school or college to read outside books, or to dream dreams. In the secluded wilds of Exmoor I had done a good deal of the latter, and had at any rate read the Waverley novels all through more than once, and, I think, now, experienced something of what an ardent American disciple of Dickens would feel on landing in London for the first time. The *Bride of Lammermoor* had been my favourite, a preference expressed, I believe, by no less illustrious a person than Mr. Gladstone, and here I was, fortuitously seated within actual sight of the suppositious scene of the

drama! My first introduction to the spoken vernacular of the heroes and heroines, with whose written dialogues I had spent so many winter evenings in the old Exmoor days, is still fresh in the memory. I may fairly say that though listening with both ears cocked to the eloquent bailiff who first drove me from the station, I didn't understand two consecutive words from start to finish. The Lothian Doric in its archaic purity, of which this old man was a notable exponent, would have utterly confounded any unaccustomed southerner. Nor was a capacity to speak the dialect of both Wiltshire and Devonshire with tolerable proficiency of much assistance, if it indicated, at any rate, an open and receptive mind in such matters. Indeed that the Lothian hind even of to-day is unintelligible to a southern ear, and even to one reasonably habituated to strange experiences, I was an interested witness to quite recently.

This was a famous farm, the most noted in East Lothian, but, nevertheless, in every sense a typical one. There was nothing fancy about it. It was not the hobby of a wealthy merchant or an enthusiastic peer, but the holding of a genuine tenant farmer who, with his forebears, had lifted it to its present condition, and made his living and a good deal more out of it. It resembled most others for miles around, save, perhaps, for being a shade more remarkable. It consisted of some six hundred acres, and the rent was £3, 5s., on the usual nineteen year lease. Yet it was only second-grade East Lothian land all the same. The eastern half of the county, speaking broadly, consists of the famous Dunbar red land, a loose red loam, actually the very best, I believe, in Britain, which fetched from £4 to £5, and is not far short of that figure to-day. The western portion of the county running into Midlothian, which is on a par with its neighbour, is mainly a clay soil of ordinary quality, but, like the others, has been farmed at high pressure for perhaps three

generations. A farm in Lincolnshire, on similar soil at the same time, would have fetched 30s. to £2. Our farm (as I shall call it for short) was regarded in the neighbourhood, whether justly or not, as under-rented. At any rate, when the lease expired, the rent was raised. But this was before the cataclysm, which most people date from 1879. Partly because that was the most disastrous year meteorologically of the century, and also because it accidentally marked the beginning of the decline of the British agricultural interest. But in the days I am recalling no shadow of that dark cloud had yet appeared. The condition of the country, the slow growth of ages, seemed as immutable as the sun and moon.

The tenant, by that time elderly, was the third in descent, and was just completing the century of family occupation. This carried things back almost to the dawn of improved Scottish agriculture and commercial development, when even the Lothians were immeasurably behind England, which they were destined so immeasurably to surpass. There were men still living even in my time who could remember when much of this now famous farm was water-logged morass. It had been reclaimed and brought to its high pitch of fertility by the skill, labour, and earned capital of its occupants, and the present one, having a wide reputation, people dropped in to see him and his farm from all parts of Europe. It is much the same to-day, but for the fact that less labour is employed. But capitalist farming on a big scale is no longer in favour with the outsider. The British system is supposed to be all wrong. Foreigners have learned an immense deal in forty years; yet I do not suppose that even to-day, to the eye that can read these things, such a spectacle exists in the world as that presented by East Lothian. I imagine, too, that the proceeds per acre which support the three classes living upon it will bear comparison with any genuine farming country. But this

scheme doesn't recommend itself to a more crowded world for familiar reasons, social and political perhaps, rather than practical and scientific. At any rate, distinguished foreign agriculturists no longer drive up to this or neighbouring doors and ask to be shown around. Young Danish landowners *in prospectu* no longer come to sit at the feet of Lothian farmers, as was their wont in former days. On the contrary, we are now told to go to school with the Danes. The first lesson in this course of instruction would, I fancy, be one that neither the British countryman nor his urban critic are often capable of following, namely, an undreamed-of self-denial in food, raiment, and amusement.

Forty years ago, however, all went merrily, though, judging from wage figures, one would be inclined to say, except with the labourers. But the old Scottish habit, once applicable even to rent, dating from periods of poverty and lack of specie, that of paying wages in kind, was still in part maintained from motives of wisdom and prudence. There is still something of it remaining. So many rows of potatoes in the main crop, the keep of a cow, the hauling of coals, and a free house, I remember, were leading items. The whole value was about thirteen shillings a week. Everything included, it now equals a pound or more, paid mostly in money. But the Lothian hind managed somehow to nourish and clothe himself and his family pretty well even upon the old terms. He had plenty of milk for one thing ; now he has none. The basic diet of the family was oatmeal porridge, upon which the young grew lusty, and the adult with a good few accessories was at least healthy and strong. To-day neither young nor old touch it, and as the keep of a cow no longer figures in the arrangement, there is comparatively little milk for the children. Tea and anæmic bakers' bread, cheap jam, with the addition of meat of sorts, including a good deal of tinned stuff, is now the regimen. The

housewifely qualities of the former peasant women seem to-day as conspicuous for their absence as cheap millinery is for its abundance, at all points from Edinburgh to Newcastle.

There was practically not an acre of permanent grass on our farm. It was run on the six-course shift of turnips, barley, seeds, oats, potatoes, wheat. The permanent labour staff was very large, and besides the men there was a regular supply of women, perhaps twenty in all, many of them from the western Highlands and islands, who had no English, and earned roughly a shilling a day. Though now present in much smaller numbers, they earn nearly twice as much. Those not members of labourers' families lived in groups in bothies. They were known as 'workers,' and in Northumberland as 'bondagers.' They wore, as they still do, a uniform costume of straw bonnets fitted with 'uglies,' such as ladies wore for a brief season in the fifties, a cotton blouse, pink 'kerchief, short linsey skirt, woollen stockings and thick hob-nailed boots. They were mostly stout-built lasses, with the face of harvest moons and the limbs of Amazons. There was some particular date in the calendar, I forget which, when they claimed the privilege, if they could catch an unwary isolated male, irrespective of station, of tossing him in a rick cloth. An unsuspecting Oxford graduate well known to me, and who rather fancied himself, once overlooked the fatal hour, and was sent many times up to the roof of the barn and down again.

All the labour, as is the custom in the north, lived upon the farm. There was not much drinking, I think, among the hinds. The village ale-house, with its nocturnal parliament, was not a Lothian institution. Sometimes a labourer, generally one of the few Irishmen employed, would disappear for a day or two with a bottle of whisky. But they were, for the most part, sober, thrifty, and industrious; in short, a very fine lot, though not courtly in manner.

I don't know what has become of them all. I was walking over this very farm the other day with a bailiff of twenty years' standing, and he said that he did not think a single one of the old stock was still on the place, or near it. They had gone to the towns or to Canada.

There were two stationary engines for threshing, and a steam plough, with which most farms were then equipped, but the latter went out of favour in East Lothian. I believe they were found to disturb an undesirable substratum of soil. The horse ploughs, drawn always by a pair of strong Clydesdales, ploughed eight to ten inches deep in the tile-drained highly-fed lands. It was a curious contrast to the spectacle even yet to be seen, in Kent and Sussex, of four horses, a man and a boy, painfully labouring a five-inch furrow. There was not an open ditch on the farm, nor yet a tree, while the narrow thorn-hedges were clipped low and trim like those of a garden, and occupied practically no space. No wildflowers grew on that farm. There was no room for them. Nor, for a like reason, did any birds build, though flocks of wild geese, pigeons (tame and wild), and plover speckled the big, clean fields through the autumn and winter months. It all sounds prosaic enough, I dare say, but the look of conscious, well-directed skill, of organised energy, of productiveness and pride of accomplishment, lay upon the land, and almost touched the sublime. One felt proud, at least I did, of being even temporarily associated with such achievements, and such a region. One felt there was nothing like it in the world, nor was there, and after all that is something. A London hairdresser would have been dimly conscious that he was looking upon a new sort of country. One had no need to think of what one's agricultural friends would say to it, for a good many visitors of that persuasion came along, and it did not in the least matter what county south of the Tweed

they hailed from, or how grey they might be in experience, for they threw up the sponge at the first sight of East Lothian, and proceeded to readjust their standards.

If any one should, quite pardonably, suspect me of hyperbole, let him get out for a few hours at Dunbar, which is in the cream of this country, the next time he goes north. It would be worth his while. Nay, there is no occasion to do even so much. It would be quite enough merely to look out of the window, instead of going to sleep between Berwick and Edinburgh. If he knows anything at all of such matters, he will see and understand at once. For superficially, at any rate, there has been little deterioration. The old tenantry that made the country and the old names have in a great measure gone, to be sure, and there is a new breed. The old pride of outlook, too, the glory, not, as I said before, to be expressed in print, has departed, of course, as elsewhere. I am quite certain that in those days the normal person regarded the established order of things, with reasonable reservations, as eternal. To-day it is quite certain that nobody thinks anything of the kind, or would like to forecast the conditions of the day after to-morrow—well, say, of twenty years hence. This alone makes an amazing difference to an atmosphere, even to manners, deportment, and habit. I remember hearing a great Lothian landlord at his own table speak of a tenantry who paid him from £3 to £5 an acre, over thousands of acres, as 'these infernal Scotch farmers.' He was annoyed at some objections that were being raised against their highly cultivated lands being overrun, and their crops injured, by swarms of half-tame hares. This is assuredly not quoted as typical, but merely as a remark that would be utterly inconceivable in the second decade of the twentieth century as proceeding out of the mouth of a landlord so infinitely blessed as was he.

The labour of the farm went like clockwork. The steward

was a man advanced in years, but born on the farm, and of prodigious character and originality; a person indeed of amazing energy, and an almost fierce conscientiousness in his work. A rigid calvinist of the U.P. persuasion, but without a particle of sanctimoniousness, he spent all Sunday in devotional exercises, both at home and in a distant church, and the week in putting into practical shape what he had professed on the Sabbath. No hind shirked under his piercing grey eye. I think he partly frightened them and partly inspired them with a sense of the deadly sin of taking their master's money, and not giving him their best efforts for it, a principle he illustrated in his own person with unflagging devotion. The work went like machinery. All the hoeing of the grain-crops and roots, potato-planting and lifting, was done by women, as well as the granary work at threshing times, where these Amazons climbed up and down ladders with sacks of grain on their backs that might have broken that of a packhorse.

In the field they worked in a gang, with a grieve in attendance, whose temporary absence was always signalised by far-heard cackling, like a cloud of seagulls, punctuated with the queer scream-like laugh of the West Highland women. There was a large flock of Border Leicesters on the place, and I think some Cheviots, but crossing, now so universal, had not then come much into fashion. The shepherd was a clever, grave, and dignified person, who had one brother Fellow of a Cambridge college, and another a master in a big English public school. If he had followed in their steps, he would probably have been a bishop, and a very sound as well as an ornamental one, I am sure, he would have made; for I think he eventually reached some quasi-official position connected with sheep. The yield of all the grain-crops was very heavy, and indeed required to be, seeing the rent and the powder that was put under them.

I won't worry the reader with figures, but may mention that potatoes were a prominent feature, though the natural soil was nothing like the Dunbar red land, which at that time, with its noted 'regents,' held the high-class London market in the hollow of its hand. Probably sixty to eighty acres were planted every year. Potatoes in that country have some affinity to hops in the sense that they are something of a gamble; a bumper year pays, or more than pays, for the lean seasons which do not meet expenses. The latter may be guessed at, when I quote from some old notes of mine that forty loads of barnyard manure, and nine hundredweight of artificials, were applied to the acre. And the crops of wheat that followed them were of some value when the price was about 60s. a quarter. I have been recently able to confirm beyond question the accuracy of my recollection that a dealer offered £50 an acre for a thirty-acre field of potatoes on our farm in September, bearing all expenses of lifting and hauling himself. And the roots! the Swedes particularly. For south-eastern Scotland has rather a short rainfall, and 'bagies,' as they are called in Northumberland, preponderated over white turnips. However, they can be seen to-day pretty much as they were by the curious in such matters, if any such there be. I have some grounds for asserting that the Lothian farmer of the seventies considered he was doing well if he made an average of ten per cent.: no very excessive profit in a risky business! But less than that, which was probably the rule, had great attractions for a large number of young Scotsmen outside the actual farming families. The reletting of a farm at the end of a lease had already tended in the direction of the highest bidder, for competition was very strong. Twelve pounds an acre instead of the usual English estimate of £8, was then regarded as the necessary capital in the Lothians.

Some families held several farms, and not always in the same county. The life of the large farmer, to the intelligent moneyed middle class of the cities, had a certain glamour about it apart from the attractions which country life has always had for many people at a little distance from it. There was even something in it socially for the wealthy retail tradesman's son, as it broke certain limitations inevitably associated with the counter. So competition was extremely keen, and the hereditary claim was nothing like so respected by lessors, or so valued by lessees, as in the England of that day. Altogether the relationship between landlord and tenant was, and is, much more commercial. No one from the south could help being conscious of the difference, particularly if they had an opportunity of seeing something of both classes. The easy friendliness and still slightly feudal attachment of the big English tenant—for only such, of course, afford comparison—to his landlord seemed generally lacking in the Lothians. I would not suggest that there was any ill-feeling or lack of mutual respect. But the barrier seemed very rigid, and common meeting grounds fewer. The lairds were on a big scale, and held the stiffer and more exclusive social traditions of the north, while the very pride and independence of the substantial tenantry made for a wider cleavage than existed under the more plastic and genial English conditions. The church, for one thing, was a weak link, as half the lairds were Episcopalians, and drove away many miles on Sunday to an Episcopal chapel. The clergy of the establishment, too, were then more austere, and usually plain-living people, without the social and yet more the academic ties that so often linked the squire and the parson. The sociable clerical element with that of the detached gentry, such as retired officers and their many civilian equivalents of modest means, together with the cadets, male and female, of landed

families, of which the bulk of much rural society in England is composed, had virtually no existence in East Lothian. It was not a hunting country. There was no cricket, and I never heard of such a thing as even a garden party. County society was extremely wealthy, frequently distinguished, and almost invariably well born. I do not think there was a *novus homo*, certainly not one of commercial extraction in those days, between Prestonpans and Cockburnspath, or between the Lammermuirs and the sea. And if there had been, I am quite sure he would not have had a very pleasant time. It is not surprising that so many of the successful Glasgow men of that day bought estates in England. I fancy the change of attitude in these things is considerable even in the Scottish lowlands. 'I am an unfortunate devil,' a young laird of my acquaintance used to say; 'I am the only landowner of small income in all this blessed county. It 's an awful position, I can tell you.' It sounded a trifle humorous, as his name was of the best, and his estate was from £2000 to £3000 a year. However, he obviously couldn't stand it, for a few years afterwards he sold his picturesque inheritance and left the country. I was standing on it the other day, and he and his had been almost forgotten by the very villagers at his gates.

The farmers enjoyed themselves socially not a little. Whist and loo parties, and little dances; golf and curling and coursing, with frequent runs up to Edinburgh, enlivened their leisure hours. Market day at Haddington, though but a little town, then the finest grain market in the north, was an animated scene. The older farmers of position frequently drove thither in broughams; while pairs, landaus, wagonettes, dogcarts rattled over the cobbled streets amid the dull rumble of the two-wheeled carts (wagons are not known in Scotland) carrying the sacks of sample grain, which were ranged down the centre of the

Corn Exchange, the owner or his steward standing by each one. Those were the days of whisky-drinking, and in the bare smoke-rooms of the chief hotels the thick atmosphere rang with the clink of glasses and the boisterous chaff of the younger farmers and the older ones of plainer habit. Here, too, you might see a young Swedish or Danish count, or German baron, attired in true British sporting fashion, indistinguishable, save for his broken English, from the son of the big Norfolk farmer or Dorset squire, who was there too, acquiring, perchance, as much of the convivial habits of the country as he was of its agriculture. All this has practically vanished; so in its old amplitude has the crowded farmers' ordinary at the George. Indeed the glory of the grain market has virtually departed. Selling wheat at 32s., and other grain in proportion, is not a hilarious business, and even though the East Lothian tenant has other irons in the fire, and still pays a rent that would make a south country tillage-farmer shudder, habits have altered miraculously. Nowadays the Lothian farmer has a modest scone and butter and a glass of milk at the confectioner's, and goes home like a good boy to five o'clock tea in the drawing-room with his wife.

But I am not concerned with degenerate moderns, but with the days of old, which even in the country itself seemed on revisiting it to have almost passed into oblivion, so clean a sweep has time and the smashing of the old order of things made in its personnel. No Danes, nor Swedes, nor Germans, nor Colonials, nor embryo English squires, agents, or farmers, or at least very few of them, go to East Lothian now. Not because East Lothian is any less the apotheosis of high-class agriculture, but because the point of view and the economic model has altered.

Harvest, as may be imagined, was a considerable festival. There were no self-binders then, and double the number of

extraneous hands were taken on. Irishmen came by thousands into the Lothians, and we, of course, had our share. Porridge and a bottle of beer—the only time beer was in evidence—with, I think, a loaf, was served out all round at stated hours. The porridge was mixed in delightfully wholesale fashion in an outside boiler, normally used for cattle food, and I can still see the perspiring coachman, impressed to such service on those occasions, stirring it with a spade, and shovelling it out into the wooden bickers handed in by the harvesters or their female dependants.

The Lothian hind was as dour a body as ever did a full day's work between the four seas. His successor to-day, judging from mere cursory intercourse, seems of much the same habit, though his head, no doubt, is full of new and strange visions. His employers say he is not the man he was. At any rate, I can answer for the fact that he is not now averse to taking the usual sixpence or shilling for a nominal service as in the south, whereas in old days he would have been insulted by such an offer, small as were his wages. One of my most painful moments in that halcyon period was a certain occasion when a ploughman on the farm stopped his horses as I passed, and walking gloomily towards me, handed me a halfpenny. 'I 'll be obleeged if ye 'll gie this to Maister C——, an' tell him I 've nae need o't jest at present.' It was dreadful. Maister C—— was fresh from the highest honours of Cirencester, and having held the man's plough for a few furrows, had 'paid his footing,' after the southern custom, with, as he supposed, a shilling, and being of a sensitive temperament had walked rapidly away to avoid the expected expression of gratitude. He didn't yet know the Lothian hind, and yet more, had unwittingly heaped outrage upon insult. The other day a friend of mine was out otter-hunting in this his own county, and as they were engaged in digging out an otter,

a rustic, whose services had been impounded, broke his spade or mattock, whereupon my friend assured him, with some superfluous exercise of tact and delicacy, that he should not be a loser by the accident.

'It disna matter a damn. It's no' mine,' was the characteristic and disconcerting answer.

Even in those comparatively serene times, there was no lack of political bitterness. There was a strong Liberal element, now, I believe, no longer the case, among the Lothian tenantry, at which I am not surprised. For one thing, prior to the Reform Bill of 1838, the landowners of Scotland had enjoyed a greater monopoly of political power than even their English contemporaries, and had undoubtedly exercised it rather harshly, and the traditions of this still showed at the polls. In the early eighteenth century, when Scottish agriculture was emerging from primitive conditions, the lairds had taken a most active and praiseworthy part in lifting their then reluctant tenants out of the old ruts, as no printed book shows more luminously than that entertaining and instructive autobiographical classic of *Ramsay of Ochtertyre*. But during the following century and that amazing agricultural development which placed the Lothian tenants by their skill and energy in the van of progress the lairds had little left to do but receive their rents, look after their woods, and thank the gods. As patrons and encouragers of agriculture, for which much of England and, of course, many parts of Scotland always offered scope, there was practically none for the most enthusiastic amateur and landowner. This possibly assisted towards that greater detachment of landlord from tenant which has been alluded to as so noticeable to English sojourners in the Lothians. The Liberals among the farmers had two leading grievances at this time: one, in connection with the Scottish law of hypothec, that gave

the landlord certain prior rights over all other creditors, and the other—which was undoubtedly a great hardship —the havoc made on the crops by game. What sane sportsmen, and that, too, at the risk of fierce ill-feeling, wanted with thousands of hares, is one of those mysteries that no doubt the keenest lover of the gun, as used to-day, would utterly fail to understand. It was indeed a senseless craze. The modern sportsman may be in some respects a sybarite. But he at least demands a worthy mark, and a hare, well enough for an odd shot now and again, is surely a pitiful object for wholesale attack. It was, of course, this immoderate craze for hares in many parts of Scotland and England that provoked the Hares and Rabbits Bill.

The tenant of our farm, though a sportsman himself, and indeed owning a small grouse moor, felt the injustice of game depredations most keenly. He was a man of parts, and had been a friend of Cobden's, and had contested a short time before a Lowland constituency. Scottish Toryism still rather resented the notion of a tenant farmer, howsoever notable, aspiring to parliamentary honours, and the landlord in this case was the apotheosis of old-fashioned, arrogant Toryism. He was a person of wide possessions, and rather prominent position, and it was at the close of my residence on the farm he made the blunder of his life, and sent its distinguished occupant formal notice that his lease, now nearing its termination, would not be renewed. There was a tremendous row, not on the part of the tenant, who was a quiet, level-headed man, but in the outside world. The London dailies sent down special correspondents (Archibald Forbes among them), a comparatively rare enterprise in those days, and the Press took the matter up. The Liberals cried shame, while exulting no doubt that an enemy had so given his party away, while the latter groaned and asked to be saved from their friends. Here, said the

public, was about the most distinguished tenant farmer in Scotland, whose name was synonymous far beyond the bounds of Britain with that scientific agriculture which made our country then famous among the nations, kicked out of his farm because he had ventured to stand for Parliament in the Liberal interest—a farm, too, that he and his had occupied for a century, and made what it was, the Mecca of agricultural pilgrims from all countries. Unfortunately, too, this was the simple and literal truth. There was nothing to be said. At that time there were a good many people who held that a man had a right to do what he liked with his own, regardless of circumstances. But that was hardly convincing to level-headed Conservatives, who were really more disturbed than the Liberals, and hadn't even the consolation of proclaiming their annoyance upon the housetop. It was a singular blunder for an experienced and otherwise just man, who had, moreover, held political office. For there was no shadow of personal quarrel or private disagreement. The laird had done something of the same kind a few years previously, that made some noise even in the south, but it had taught him nothing, and this was far worse.

The agricultural press of the Continent took up the matter hotly, and professed amazement that such things could be in Great Britain, and the reader may possibly feel the same surprise. It was a nine-days' wonder, but it helped I think, to facilitate some needed legislation. It is irrelevant perhaps that retirement from an East Lothian farm towards the middle of the seventies was a blessing in disguise. For the great debacle soon fell upon the land, and many a Lothian farmer under a long lease must have prayed in the eighties for deliverance by a notice to quit, as he saw his capital shrinking away. Nearly all the old race of tenants disappeared in the bad times : some went under ;

others, in the person of their sons, adopted more promising careers. The rents are now back, however, to within about fifteen per cent. of the figures of the seventies, and there seems an inexhaustible supply of sanguine candidates from other sources to face them under apparently far less propitious conditions. Whatever may be the measure of their individual success, at any rate they keep the face of the country up to its old mark, and a sight for the gods, and I have been there much during the last few years.

I was fortunate in my companions. Indeed, unvouched-for applicants were not considered on those premises. And there were some strange youths about in the country, whose friends fondly imagined them to be preparing themselves to own or manage English estates or farm English farms, upon high East Lothian principles. As for us, we lived *en garçon* in the original farmhouse (a new one had been built), well looked after by the capable family of the steward already eulogised. As a chance illustration of the part which Scotland played in the making of Ontario, it may be worth noting that the only brother of the farmer had gone out there in early life, and his sons were now head of a large mercantile business, while the steward's three sons, without, of course, the same opportunities, had gone to another part of the same province, and risen to prosperity, all of whom I knew later on in Canada. The eldest was in fact M.P. for his county at Ottawa, and would have proceeded to Cabinet rank but for quite unusual scruples which did him credit, and were characteristic of the son of his father. I was fortunate, as I have said, in my companions, as they meant business, and were already well equipped by their respective antecedents to appreciate all that was going on, as well as being remarkably nice fellows. In my own case the friendship was maintained with each one of them, till death, or till the present hour. The group included the son

of the farmer himself, who was then beginning to be his father's right hand, and already making his debut as a judge at the big stock shows. Another was the eldest son to a fine property in North Lincolnshire, and for a wonder was an ardent and practical agriculturist. Little did he, or indeed any one, then dream of the disaster that, within a decade, was to smite both the landlords and the substantial tenantry, and all connected with them of that noble county. Who could have imagined that well-equipped farms, then held profitably at 30s. or £2 by a tenantry, in a different way as high class as those of the Lothians, would drop to 10s. less, a big tithe, and even at that figure not seldom look in vain for a tenant; or again that much pretty good land in the same county would, in the next decade, be offered vainly for sale at £10 an acre freehold.

Another of our company was the eldest son and factotum of his father, who owned a small but beautiful little estate in the heart of Ireland, which he mostly farmed himself, and also, like so many Irish squires, managed the large territory of an absentee neighbour. The old gentleman was alive on the first of many visits, which, in the course of twenty odd years, I paid to that delectable spot, and was a fine type of the well-bred, old-fashioned, stay-at-home Irish country gentleman and sportsman. Though by then much afflicted, and almost house-bound, he still stuck manfully to his port, an achievement in which he was nobly supported by a venerable clerical crony and neighbour, one of those glorious originals it is almost a privilege to have imprinted upon the scroll of memory. This one was an old bachelor, the cadet of an illustrious Irish house, and though of exceptionally low stature, with a complexion of vermilion, and ugly to an incredible degree of quaintness, the aristocrat and cast-iron Tory that he was blazed out all over him. He was something of a scholar with it all, too, which imparted a

further flavour. He was said to represent in his own person all that remained of the recently Disestablished Church of Ireland, having positively refused to come under the financial arrangements of Gladstone's Act, though, being comfortably off, he still held his country living, under what arrangement I do not know. He sat so low at table that his fiery, self-satisfied, quizzical visage was very little above it as he sipped his wine and told stories of the days of old in a subdued, but bell-like, precise, superfine voice. These he delivered as he did his sermons, in queer little jerks on a single note, and in detached sentences, regulated rather by measurement than punctuation, with a pause between each, a style which lent itself as irresistibly to mimicry as his person did to caricature. A favourite anecdote of his always began, '*I remember—in the year* 1838*—when the whole of Ireland—was in a state of disorder—bordering on rebellion.*' The gist of it was an attack of a band of peasants, with pitch-forks, on a hunting party, of which, in his jocund youth, he was a member. When both old gentlemen had been long gathered to their fathers, my friend, who, like so many Irishmen, was a quite first-rate mimic, could always delight a company who had known the old man by bursting out suddenly, and with extraordinary fidelity to the original, 'I remember—in the year 1838—when the whole of Ireland——' and so forth through the entire story, or some other one of the old man's. All three, however, now lie in the same churchyard, under the Slieve Bloom Mountains, and the bowery old house, with its splendid beeches and purling river below the lawn and beautiful grass lands, has passed into alien hands.

The hospitality of this last pillar of the Church of Ireland to those he loved was almost ferocious. A day's shooting or fishing in his neighbourhood, particularly the latter, as the river ran under his house, carried serious risks of being,

if not utterly thwarted, at least most grievously interfered with. For, if observed, there was no escape, and once inside those portals, what with trays and bottles, nay, whole meals specially cooked, and stories, and the masterfulness of the little man, joined to the deference due to his years from youth, there was no deliverance. So we used to leave the river some way from his rectory, and circumvent the latter by wide casts behind hedges or walls, for to be reported by a gardener or labourer as in the near neighbourhood without coming in would have been, on my friend's part, an unforgivable misdemeanour. The old man invariably wore a tall hat and a swallow-tail coat, and I am proud to remember that for many years after his death an absolutely faithful reproduction in pencil—for caricature was unnecessary—of his marvellous physiognomy achieved by myself hung framed over the hearth, by which he had consumed so many bottles of irreproachable port. It fell to me more than once to make a third, or rather a fourth, at one of those seances, and I can still see the cold severity of his protuberant eye as it caught the decanter surreptitiously halting by my elbow. 'Come, sir, you 're idling, you 're idling.' The pencil sketch, the man to the life, though I say it as should not, now hangs before me: the bald, round, low head nearly obscured behind by the back of the coat collar, the enormous flat ears, the antique stand-up collar rising out of a white stock, and covering half the purple-red cheeks, the gooseberry eyes blinking through gold spectacles, the tremendous, rather pendent bottle nose, and the thick lips that lovingly caressed the rim of the wine-glass, and smacked their satisfaction afterwards.

But to return to East Lothian, otherwise the county of Haddington: the residence or birthplace of notabilities innumerable, from Bothwell and John Knox to Mr. Balfour and Jane Welsh Carlyle, has altered as little within a life-

time perhaps as any in Britain. Few coast-lines, however, have in one sense altered more. Save at North Berwick and Dunbar, the waves broke in my time through the rocky islets that guard it upon an almost lonely shore. We had a sand farm of comparatively small value upon it, from which the spring gales used sometimes to whirl up the freshly-sown corn crop, together with the surface soil, and blow both into the sea. The old golf-course at Gullane, then a rustic village round a green, consisted of thirteen holes, and was only patronised by a few local farmers, ministers, or dominies through the week, and a handful of players from Edinburgh on the Saturday. There was a rough nine holes, too, where the beautiful little course at Archerfield has been since laid out. I was probably the first south countryman who ever struck a golf-ball, however ineffectively, on the now classic links of Gullane. At any rate, I was certainly the first to become a member of a local club, though the only competition I ever ventured to engage in was the annual dinner at the neighbouring inn, and at that dread function I should have required a longer handicap than even on the green to make any kind of showing.

North Berwick was then but a little watering-place for Edinburgh. Its nine-hole course, however, next to Musselburgh, then still in its glory, was the best-known one south of the Firth. North Berwick is now a place of world-wide golfing note, vastly expanded since those days, while villas and residences spread east and west far along the coast on either side of the town. Gullane, from an obscure rustic village, has become a popular residential and very noted golfing centre, with half a dozen eighteen-hole courses, frequented by people from all over the world, more or less at its doors. I doubt if in my day a south countryman ever appeared even on North Berwick links, though there were generally, I believe, a few stray converts at St. Andrews.

Very few people in the south had then the faintest notion what the game was. Its name sounded as vaguely as would that, let us say, of 'knur-and-spell' to-day, in outside ears. One substantial standard book on games in my possession briefly disposed of it as 'a species of hockey played in Scotland.' Carrying clubs about on southern railroads, even ten or fifteen years after those I write of, was a quite embarrassing and almost disagreeable experience. A bundle of them, for there were then no bags, had an uncanny and exasperatingly perplexing look to the ordinary mortal. They were like nothing else, and the occupants of a railway carriage couldn't take their eyes off them as they lay in the rack. There was no placing them in any known category of sport or business, while the owner became automatically identified with this sustained open-eyed and uncomfortable curiosity. It got on one's nerves after a time, and as each newcomer entered the carriage one found oneself awaiting the crucial moment when his wandering eyes should light upon one's clubs. For you knew that almost to a certainty he would see a vision that would utterly confound him. All this is now long forgotten. But I remember it in the eighties very well, and have plenty of cause to.

Tantallon, the great stronghold of the Douglases, was near us; the Bass Rock was within sight. So was the fatal hill above Dunbar from whose secure summit the fanatical Scottish preachers sent Leslie and his army down to Cromwell and destruction. It added flavour to a day's fishing, too, to kill trout beneath the hoary ruins of Bothwell's Castle of Hailes, where he and Queen Mary halted on their flight to Dunbar. Far away out upon the distant sea lay the great wild headland of St. Abb's, and its line of tremendous cliffs, with the dizzily perched ruins of Fast Castle, the 'Wolf's Crag' of Scott's *Bride of Lammermoor*, confronting the storms beneath them. A pilgrimage, one wild spring

morning, to the last refuge of the hapless Master of Ravenswood, remained vividly with me as I stood there again in blazing sunshine above a motionless sea but the other day. With Haddington, to be sure, and its splendid abbey we were, naturally, on familiar terms, though mainly on other accounts. Prestonpans, where the royal troops were routed by the young Pretender, could be dimly marked from my bedroom window. Ruinous towers lifted their corbelled and embattled heads here and there amid the immaculate turnips, or the level grainfields, ever-present reminders of the triumphs of peace and science over the bloody wastage of days made memorable by the prose and verse that has thrown over them an eternal glamour. And away beyond, within a dozen miles, rolled the Lammermuirs, physically another Exmoor, as they used to seem to me. It was a pleasant change every now and again to get away for a few days' trouting in the heart of its wilds, and shift our quarters to a certain snug and secluded inn on the banks of the Whiteadder, now long abolished. Here a hard-featured but large-hearted spinster, well worthy of remembrance, a second Meg Dodds, administered in racy and masterful fashion to the needs of a handful of anglers from various parts of the Lowlands, who sang Scotch songs and told fearsome fish stories between their tumblers over the peat fire of nights.

I moved on later for a few months to the red lands of Dunbar. And hereabouts along the narrowing end of East Lothian, where the Lammermuirs draw nearer to the sea, the high farming common to the whole country was applied to the finest natural tract of soil in Britain. A local friend of mine took a farm in this region at a rent of £5 an acre, and considered himself, and was considered by others, as fortunate in being the selected tenant. Attached to the low country farm, which was my headquarters, and whose lands

stretched to the estuary of the Tyne, was a large sheep farm, some ten miles distant on the slope of the Lammermuirs, in charge of a steward. Up there, with the help of a horse, I spent a good deal of time, quite content with my own company and that of the hill shepherds, a race of men unsurpassed of their kind in the island of Britain. One is told to-day in Northumberland and Yorkshire that a Lammermuir 'herd' carries his credentials in his origin. But in those particular years wool was 2s. to 2s. 6d. per pound, and the hill article, of course, in proportion, the record price, I fancy, of all time. In those days, too, the hill shepherds wore Tam o' Shanter bonnets, and in cold weather wrapped themselves in plaids folded around them by the ancient traditional turns, and derived their stamina from porridge and milk, with braxy mutton as an occasional accessory. The bonnet and plaid have now utterly vanished, and you will find the shepherd confronting a stormy day in an ordinary macintosh and a sou'wester, while his wages, which no men in the country in these days of higher pay better deserve, no doubt enable them to be more epicurean in diet. From this vantage-point, too, I was frequently brought in contact with the big sheep-farmers of the wilderness, men whose holdings covered innumerable square miles, and counted their black-faces by thousands. There were some fine patriarchs then upon the Lammermuirs, men of knowledge and ability, and of names renowned through many counties, whose isolation made them hospitable to a fault. They dined between three and five o'clock, and after dinner the kettle and the rummers and the ladles, and whisky such as only a millionaire can aspire to nowadays, came on the board. And then you had to look out if, peradventure, you were a neophyte at such seances, and urge some justifiable reason for the ordering of your horse betimes. The country abounded in twelve-

tumbler men in those days, though I don't wish to imply for a moment that all these hospitable souls touched that figure. They are now in any case practically extinct, while the rummers and silver ladles are exhibited in glass cases as family heirlooms to another generation who drink water or a small whisky-and-soda at lunch, and, as I mentioned before, have five o'clock tea in the drawing-room, like good boys, with their wives.

CHAPTER VII

ABERDEENSHIRE, WILTSHIRE, AND THE ISLE OF WIGHT

During several weeks of two successive winters I had an opportunity of seeing something of the polled Angus business, and, what was still more entertaining, of the men who bred and fed them. East Aberdeenshire was not a genial climate in the dead of winter, and those two winters, at any rate, rise to memory in the shape of a bleak snow-sprinkled landscape washed out anon by interludes of mist and chilly rains. A bachelor acquaintance of mine, who was at the fountainhead of the most famous breeding centre of this then newly famous breed, provided the *pied-à-terre*. He was an Oxford graduate incidentally, but otherwise wholly obsessed by a consuming ambition to produce a winner at Smithfield and Birmingham, a distinction then virtually monopolised by the particular district, in which, with more zeal than discretion, he had entered the lists. He was the son and heir of a south country squire owning some two thousand acres of as valuable smooth-lying grass land as I ever saw. But the young man himself had an absorbing passion for everything connected with agriculture in every branch, an absolutely cocksure confidence in a judgment then unmatured by experience, and an inexhaustible sheaf of theories, whose failures only gave birth to still bigger crops of them. He had almost a genius for misdirected enterprise. Instead of contenting himself with a nice little farm in his own southern country, he had precipitated him-

self into the midst of the Aberdeen graziers, the hardest-headed, keenest-trading gentry in all Britain who, of course, hailed his advent with silent satisfaction. It was against such blades as theirs that, with a bland self-assurance, he had essayed to measure his ill-tempered steel.

He was a mild little man, of rather scholarly and musical tastes, when forcibly severed, as at Oxford for instance, from all truck with the soil. But when turned loose his mania, for it amounted to that, for everything associated with Mother Earth resumed possession, and held it, unrelieved by even a gleam of material success for life. He didn't go so far as to carry a private hay-fork about with his sticks and umbrellas, to the dismay of railway passengers, like another rather simple enthusiast and Oxonian of my acquaintance in the south. But it was credibly averred that on making overtures for residence with a Lothian farmer, he had expressed the intention of bringing with him a favourite Berkshire sow, from which he could not tear himself. His father, no doubt, with wisdom and knowledge, set a financial limit, though not, I think, an altogether effective one, to his enterprises.

The operations of an Aberdeenshire winter were very different from those on the great Lothian farms. The tenants in our district were fully as substantial, but save in the matter of the weight or quality of a beast, were far less enlightened souls. The chief of polled Angus breeders, however, the 'Grand old man' of that country, was an exception among other less marked ones. For one thing, he was M.P. for the county, and a well-known figure at Westminster and throughout Scotland. He was our very near neighbour, and his hospitable doors, for he was an old bachelor, stood always open to us, and his words of wisdom and humour were at our service at all hours.

The only set-off to these amenities was that on passing

his threshold, at whatever hour of the day, the old gentleman instantly rang the bell, and the responding handmaiden was greeted with one unvarying formula: 'Isie, lass, bring glasses; aye, Isie, bring glasses.' In truth, the farmers drank whisky like water in that region, and as often as not undiluted. Nor do I remember the kettle and the toddy of the more restricted Lothian habit being often in evidence. But it didn't seem to hurt them. Perhaps their descendants are more ascetic. If so, they are having the gout while the others had the fun, such as it was. The famous pastures of the country along the Grampians, and on Donside, were always shrivelled and generally under snow when I saw them. While the farmers themselves troubled little with the tillage land, leaving the oat and turnip crops pretty much to their very capable grieves, the cattle in winter were all in the yards, and the farmers in, or around, their own or one another's houses, talking cattle and trading cattle morning, noon, and night, and I have no doubt dreaming cattle. For men of substance and fair education, they were the most one-idea'd community I have ever met in my life. My friend, whose sociability within the sphere of agriculture was insatiable, and his adaptability almost aggressive, knew every man and woman within fifteen miles. He had dropped in to the Aberdonian phraseology and idiom, and was well on the way to a tolerable Aberdonian accent, accomplishments which his weakness for high-priced potential prize-winners nipped in the bud before they had reached perfection.

Next to breeding champion beasts as a title to distinction, was the ability to spot future winners among calves or yearlings in other herds, or even on obscure, small farms, where embryo gold medallists might be lurking unsuspected in yard or pasture. We drove or rode on most possible days to one farm or another, where the company, having

gone through the byres, discussed individual beasts in the neighbourhood, their past, present, and future, as a party of Irishmen discuss every horse in the country, though without the humour that always enlivens even the inevitable topic in the distressful country. Sometimes it was dinner, sometimes supper, but always whisky and long, long encounters of wits, bids for, or offers of, this calf, or that yearling, or such and such a cow. Dealing was to these men as the very breath of life. The passion for buying or selling something on four legs seemed overmastering. When the more serious efforts to traffic with one another were exhausted, I have known the terrier or the collie upon the hearth put into the sale-ring, so to speak, and in the shape of money bids or offers of exchange provide a quite exhilarating hour. These people were not, of course, usually Highlanders. In name and nature they were Teutonic Scotsmen to the core, and the only type of North Briton I have never wanted to meet again, though in their particular vocation they were much distinguished. Their beef topped the market, and a daily special train, even thus long ago, conveyed the product of their pastures and yards to the epicurean Londoner, at an extra halfpenny a pound.

But the whole thing was both interesting and amusing. My Oxford friend, however, enjoyed the moment very literally, and joined in every fray with tireless ardour, nearly always to his undoing. Indeed the competition between an Aberdeenshire grazier of those days and a down-east Yankee would have been protracted and severe. But there were more exalted moments, when the rare sun came out upon the snow-clad uplands, and the Grampian spur above the house was worth ascending, and the mountains over about Deeside, with Lochnagar rising white against the sky, presented an inspiring spectacle. It seemed at strange odds with the portentous materialism pervading the valleys. What a

gulf was here between the point of view of the natives of the country and that of the sportsman and visitors who saw it in autumn from the ghillie, the shooting lodge, or the tourist standpoint! 'The Chief' (as we called him), too, a Highlander by blood, was an unfailing source of joy, a delightful blend of simplicity in the things that didn't matter, and shrewdness in those that did: an advanced Liberal, as things went then, and the first and sole tenant-farmer M.P. in Scotland. He was a fine old man, with silver locks and long white beard, down which his predilection for snuff left its perennial trail. It was indeed a nice question whether he could fairly claim to rank as a tenant farmer, for his extensive holding, then world-renowned for the cattle raised upon it, belonged to his brother. But the old man had a canny saying, reserved, however, for private occasions, and accompanied by a wink, that it was 'better to be at the heid o' the tenant fairmers than at the fet o' the lairds,' which in this case was indisputable.

His brother, the laird, was a minister of the high and dry Presbyterian school, a person of imposing presence, extremely high collars and grave demeanour, and was in charge of a neighbouring parish. The Chief, I think, felt that this near personal association with the Kirk demanded just a touch of recognition in his own bearing, which two small sporting events put rather amusingly to the test. Now the tenantry of that district had very little leaning towards sport. But it so happened that three or four English gentlemen farmers had settled near by, and I remember at a dinner given by the Chief on New Year's Day, their presence was the cause of an entertaining finish to the evening. His reverence the laird supported his brother on this occasion, and after dinner two of these blades, who had ridden over, waxed warm over the respective merits of their saddle-horses, and eventually a match

was made, to which his reverence, who was strait-laced, could not affect to be unconscious, while the Chief, with his brother's eye on him, though greatly interested, kept his approval within bounds. However, when it came to a proposal to ride the race then and there, for there was a full moon, the laird looked at his watch and decided that it was time for him to be off home. The prospect of countenancing a horse race, and that, too, after dinner by the light of the moon, was, of course, a fearsome one for a prominent and extremely sedate Presbyterian divine, and worse still, on his own property. But the Chief, whose protests against the moonlight business had hitherto been emphatic on the score of propriety, after he had seen the laird well away, and returned to the table, took a much more lenient view of the proposal, and in the end he repaired with the rest of the company to a forty-acre pasture above the house. The horses were duly saddled and led out; the course was sufficiently marked by the enclosing fence, while a member of the party stood wide at each corner in the character of inside posts. The horsemen got away all right, and completed two sides of the parallelogram, but on rounding the post represented as it so happened by myself at the next one, there was some misunderstanding between one of the horses and its rider, which was not surprising under such uncanny conditions, and they parted company, bringing the race for the discomfited one to an ignominious end, while the other won his money without further serious effort.

The next event which stirred the latent sporting instincts of the Chief took place in the light of day before a very numerous company. For such excitements were unprecedented in the locality. It so happened that a young Norfolk farmer, who had leased a place in the neighbourhood, and was rather a favourite of the old gentleman, had a Norfolk cob, which was a really marvellous trotter, and he

backed it to accomplish three miles in nine minutes along a turnpike road, under the saddle, ridden by himself, and he was no featherweight. There was long notice of this event, and it created a great deal of interest, being absolutely novel in character. The animal in question was a quite extraordinary mover, and showed no more inclination to break than a trained American trotter. Being a very light weight, I used occasionally to take it out when in training for the owner. When the day arrived, there was a large concourse of spectators along the route, and the Chief, with some searchings of heart as a lay pillar of the Kirk, and a conspicuous advocate in Parliament of the grievances of the tenant farmer, took the field in his carriage and pair, his usual method of locomotion at that time. In fact he was practically Master of the Ceremonies, so recklessly keen had he grown. I think he was actually the starter from his seat on the box beside his coachman, himself a well-known character, and then champion of Scotland at 'tossing the caber.' The old gentleman, anxious to keep the horse in view as long as he could, urged his driver, nothing loth, no doubt, to his top speed compatible with reasonable safety, and I well remember the quaint figure he cut on the box in his tall hat, with his white beard waving in the wind, and his horses travelling at a sharp hard canter. To such a pass had the young southerners in his midst brought his grey hairs. The match was lost, but only by a little, and, I believe, at a second and later attempt the performance was actually accomplished.

To such a pitch, too, of unwonted sporting fervour had the local atmosphere been worked up that my Oxonian friend, who couldn't ride at all, in this sense of the word, matched an Exmoor pony of his own to gallop a mile, more or less, against an animal of the same calibre belonging to a well-known stock farmer in the neighbourhood. The

latter was a man of strong horsy propensities, as well as others, of which anon. He was also a good rider. There would have been nothing worthy of mention in this affair, but for the fact that 'owners up' was the stipulation, and the fact that the Oxonian was going to ride a race, and that, too, against the redoubtable 'Flaskie' (as we will not inappropriately style him)—for farmers were known in that region by the names of their places—created a widespread interest, as it seemed to promise immense entertainment. For the Oxonian's catholic tastes in agriculture, which extended from a bull to a bee, didn't include the saddle-horse of any variety. In fact his instinct in such directions was nil, and his figure, of the long-bodied, short, fat-legged type, would almost of itself have proclaimed the fact upon the house-tops. Nevertheless he was bound over to ride himself, and I am quite certain saw no humour at all in the situation, unless he had deliberately devised the monstrous practical joke against the countryside, that the fixture proved, which I am sure, was not the case. His neighbours looked forward to the joke of their lives, and mustered at the selected tryst in great strength on the appointed morning, which was wholly propitious. I was not in the district at the time, but those who were present told me that there was a great and expectant crowd. But, if the latter were out for fun, the Oxonian had the best of it. For he simply never turned up! An indignant deputation dispatched from the field found him, I believe, still in bed. From this snug vantage-point he encountered their wrath with his imperturbable bland smile, handed over in due course to Flaskie his forfeit or stake, and as if nobody else had been concerned, no public robbed of its laugh, continued to face the world with ingenuous countenance, and to behave as if absolutely nothing had happened. His world soon forgot it except as an

excellent jest to be told over the teacups, or their Aberdeenshire equivalents. I am quite certain that the affair never cost the Oxonian even a momentary qualm, though few men would have dreamed of, or dared, such a portentous piece of cheek. But thus daring he had the laugh against his public, more even perhaps than his invincible complacency would have allowed him to admit.

Flaskie, though he won his money so easily, was, I believe, the only unforgiving neighbour, and while I was in the country had inadvertently or otherwise, an opportunity of demonstrating the fact in deplorably characteristic fashion, though it proved to himself a two-edged sword. Flaskie, I presume, could not carry his liquor like some of his friends, or else he took more. For, from most expeditions he was believed to return to the bosom of his family undeniably fou'. He was also, as related, a sportsman, particularly in the way of a fast horse between the shafts, sometimes extending to a pair driven tandem. Now the Oxonian characteristically included the breeding of prize poultry with the purchasing of prize cattle. Characteristically, also, he exhibited them at most of the principle shows in Scotland, distance and expense no object. One winter night the whole of the exhibition part of his fowl-yard was returning from Dumfries, and any one not quite hopeless in Scottish geography will understand how relieved these poor feathered aristocrats must have been to feel the home-cart once more grinding under them.

It was on the way from the station, and the groom was leading the pony up a long, straight, gentle incline cut in the face of a steep hill dark with pine woods. The way was narrow and unfenced, and the pitch below it steep. I heard the man's account when he reached home about midnight, with the pony and harness, and from this it appears that he saw the lights of a trap some way off approaching

down hill at a headlong pace, and drew off the cart as near as he dare to the edge of the steep bank, leaving even then but reasonable space for a normally careful driver to pass. Carts didn't carry lights in those days, but as the approaching trap never slackened its pace, the groom shouted at the top of his voice who he was, and what like was his precious charge. The answering shout boded little good. For it was Flaskie, with his blood up, on the way home and to bed. Whether he acted of deliberation and set purpose, as was generally suspected, remained a secret that died with him, though he survived this particular catastrophe. But in any case he struck the poultry cart fair and square on the right wheel, with the full force of his momentum hurling it down the bank among the pine trees, and scattering the crates of shrieking birds in all directions in the dark wood, with how much ultimate loss and damage I do not remember. The offender, in the meantime, came to the utter grief that he deserved, being flung violently on to the road, where his horse kicked itself free of the upturned dogcart, though the servant was sufficiently uninjured to look after his prostrate master. Flaskie got off with a broken arm that time. But he had his fun, I suppose, like Captain Holyoak, when he promptly upset the rector and himself in the ditch on hearing from the confiding parson that he lacked such an experience.

The Chief, I should imagine, had never been happier than on a memorable occasion when Queen Victoria drove over from Balmoral to pay him a visit, and see his beasts, which were led round the lawn in solemn procession for Her Majesty's inspection. He was always happy, too, in delivering his opinion on men, things, and politics, at one or other of those public dinners to which the Aberdeenshire farmers were then much addicted in the winter season. Sometimes these utterances appeared in the London press the next day,

which made glad the heart of 'the heid o' the tenant fairmers.' The first of these functions I attended proved very much of a shock. For without a suspicion of any such intent, and in any case still enjoying the immunity from such appeals that two-and-twenty usually insures to undistinguished youth, I heard the Chief at the other end of the room suddenly proposing another toast. And as silence fell upon the sixty or so owners of herds and flocks and cast-iron interiors, and the talk of bulls and queys, of stots, runts, and heifers, fell to a hush, I realised that the chairman was talking about Oxford University, of all subjects in the world, in such an atmosphere! Worse still, I soon realised, to my amazement and dismay, that the old gentleman was talking about me. He was telling his constituents, who in those days knew and cared as much about Oxford as about St. Petersburg or Madrid, that my father was 'Master of Oxford University' [1] (*sic*), which even there did sound something tolerably tremendous, and by the time he had finished the company must have been fully under the impression that I had been dispatched as a delegate of that great university, and represented in some form its appreciation of the triumphs of the polled Angus breed, and the high merit of its breeder. So I had to get up and support as best I could the glory thus thrust upon me, not mentioning inadvertently that I had never even seen Oxford to speak of, had in fact just come down from Cambridge. This would only have upset the Chief, who had painted such a flattering picture. Nor did such a trifle signify.

My lame utterances, I need not say, were not reported in the *Scotsman* or the *Times* next day, like those of the Chief, who had threatened the lairds with certain legislative measures which seemed in those halcyon days almost subversive. But he promised that he would in future have

[1] He had just become Master of University College.

regard to the native modesty natural to my immaturity, and not put me up again at a public dinner to return thanks for a great university which was not even my own. And he kept his word.

The atmosphere of profound security beneath the benevolent sway of peer, squire, and parson, breathed as serenely in the seventies over Wiltshire as over East Lothian or Cornwall, or Caithness for that matter. It was not a question of north or south, of Scottish or English, or Welsh, nor of high nor moderate, nor bad farming. These were mere details. As regards this side of the question, I am more than inclined to think that the high-rented Scottish farmer got at that time smaller share of the profits than the much lower rented and less scientific southerner; but this is irrelevant here.

It was some half-dozen years before the first muttering of the storm that I went back to Wiltshire to see something of the inner working of a great estate, rather from motives of general interest, perhaps, than of any set purpose. For the strong association of my Scottish surroundings with Canada, and the occasional visits of Canadians, had stimulated an interest in North America. A strong taste for the land in its different bearings very easily drifts into that phase of it which looks keenly towards new countries; and these, moreover, touch, and worthily touch, the imagination if you are young and have got one. There is, or was, in those days no little glamour about such enterprise, and if the instinct such a prospect arouses is sound and durable, which, after all, is a matter of physical and mental temperament, ordinary difficulties and disappointments do not bring the proverbial disillusionment, or materially alter the outlook, but are balanced against the advantages.

This impulse to 'colonise' is not easy to define, nor can it be dismissed under the cant modern phrase, 'The Call of

the Wild,' which may mean anything from a summer week in the New Forest to a winter in the Klondyke. Moreover, such a craving with a man of means can be satisfied by a four months' hunt in Newfoundland, and a return to Club-land, or its equivalent, till the Wild calls again. This other thing is quite different. The uneducated, again, cross the sea, as a rule, to better their condition, and mostly do so; it is for them most easily achieved. Others, of a different kind, go to try and make money, candidly regarding the prospect as banishment. The ex-public boy of later days usually emigrates because he can't pass examinations, or because he objects, or thinks he does, to an indoor life, never yet having known what an outdoor one really means. Sometimes his true *métier* really is intelligent physical work, for the work without the intelligence is of mighty little permanent use. Numbers of educated Englishmen have at all times, however, been attracted across the seas by something indefinable and more inspiring, superadded to the practical aspect, unintelligible to the common herd. Nay, unintelligible to most of their countrymen, to whom oversea countries that speak English, and are in one way or another the chief factor in Britain's pre-eminence, are too often tiresome entities, devoid of interest in the past or present.

Whether the absorption of Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* upon the top of Exmoor, and the spectacle of so many suns setting upon Barnstaple Bay, that cradle of imperial dreams, throughout impressionable years, sowed the seed, I do not know, but I am inclined to think they may have. A strong sense of the past, or what is called, I believe, the historical instinct, was implanted, I presume, within me, which would of a truth seem an absurdly alien ingredient in the mental make-up that looks towards new worlds. But I think even these last were illuminated by the reflected glory of the Elizabethans. Nor, like many other people, should I like

to acquit Fenimore Cooper of sowing long dormant seeds, and Savernake Forest, in childhood, offered a superb background for his inimitable scenes. The historical instinct, however, lay tolerably fallow as regards books, though I can't answer for the outdoor dreams it coloured, as there seemed at that time of life, strange to say, much better things to be done. The British Museum and the Record Office were most assuredly at that strenuous period the very last quarters to which I could have imagined myself ever resorting. The very thought of such interludes would have made me shudder, though there is nothing very strange in this. But that I should live to write many volumes of history on the land I felt drawn to, and even assist incidentally in vexing the souls of a succeeding generation of much-examined public school boys with the burden of their tale, would have seemed indeed at that day a fantastic forecast.

One thing I did witness in Wiltshire, and that was the first semi-organised protests of the agricultural labourer. These occurred during harvest with us, and naturally enough he selected the beginning of it as the most effective moment. For I don't think more than half our grain was cut by machinery ; the fagging hook did the rest, and the force employed was very large. Poor fellows ! The wages of the South at least were in inverse ratio to the high prices, and to the prosperity of the employers, and a reproach to all men. Nobody but the labourers then seemed in the least to recognise this shocking disparity. The wages were about 10s. a week, with the usual harvest allowance, bringing them up perhaps to 11s. or 12s. Employers could more easily have paid £1 then than the 16s., more or less, that the labourer aggregates in that district to-day. But they were generally indignant at his audacity in demanding such a modest share in the good things that were going. I have no doubt we all were, such is the force of habit. That

year, too, I am now reminded by a friend of those days, who has been farming ever since, was the high-water mark of agricultural prices, barring, of course, the great war panics, and their years of scarcity. Beef was 12s. a stone. Wheat was nearly 60s., and to give a precise illustration, wether-hogs were selling in Lincoln market for 80s. 6d. Joseph Arch came on the scene then, or soon afterwards, demanding a better living for the labourer, and aroused much indignation. Unfortunately, agricultural prosperity soon after this began to turn, not so much as yet from the causes that really mattered and came to stay, but from a succession of wet seasons, which culminated in the fateful year of 1879. Not fateful merely from the climatic terrors which marked it, but because these coincided with the first serious assaults of the foreign competitor, which directly and indirectly brought about the revolution in English country life. Current methods on the low country clays and green sands of Wiltshire were an interesting contrast to those of the Lothians, but they would assuredly not interest the reader. The greater number of horses used for cutting the shallower furrows was insistent. So was the scattering piecework in the turnip-hoeing, as opposed to the marshalled battalions of Amazons that drove ahead like clockwork, with a gruff grieve behind them in the Lothians. So were the comparatively weedy, unhoed grain-crops. So was the servility of the poor labourer, and his anxiety to ' drink your health ' on all occasions.

I don't suppose there are many of those queer Methodistical households now left within the pale of the Church of England, and in what, speaking in a wide sense, may be termed Society. There were lots of them in those days, as everybody knows, and the harm they sometimes unwittingly accomplished in their clumsy efforts to recruit the ranks of the elect, and to present religion in its most lugu-

brious and repellent garb, I should imagine was incalculable. They took good care of one another, too, in the things of this world. The big man of this persuasion, that is to say, with patronage and appointments, was given to making it understood that only 'Christians,' or, in other words, persons of his own views, need apply, and the smaller fry more or less followed suit. It is needless to add that they were consequently in frequent trouble through the temptations thus afforded to hypocritical rascality.

My old gentleman was as honest as the day, but I venture to doubt if he would have been in charge of two great estates if the noble owners had not both been of the Calvinistic persuasion. At any rate, there were few outward signs of ability or spontaneous interest in the land or its occupants; though I fancy these estates ran on oiled wheels, as was not surprising in those halcyon days, with well-paid underlings. My Puritan friend was perfectly competent to collect rents, and may have had many other qualifications for aught I know. But it was not easy to judge when these things played an altogether secondary part to that of a rather militant theology. It was impossible to avoid contrasting this prosperous and rather colourless and tiresome prophet with the dear old steward in Scotland who worshipped with unobtrusive ardour, and at no slight physical exertion from morning till night on Sundays, and carried out his precepts through the week with a cheery and racy vigour that made him a treasure beyond price to his employers, as well as a pleasure to any company, and an example to those under his authority. My Wiltshire prophet kept a good establishment and a good table. He was commended to me by one of the shining lights of his profession who, I did not know till afterwards, was among the elect. Hence the commendation, and I was rather taken aback on first sniffing the atmosphere. However, it

was only a matter of a few months, and it had the great advantage of being within reasonable reach of Marlborough and old friends and old haunts, even occasionally to the old cricket grounds once again. The prophet didn't quite like this. It savoured of the outer and the wicked world, but he had to put up with it.

This now obsolete type of individual, if indeed it be obsolete, felt, I think, a kind of moral responsibility from his own restricted point of view, for any one under his roof, with no reference to ripeness or unripeness of years. This had nothing whatever to do with the professional advantages the prophet was supposed to impart. These appeared altogether negative and secondary. The old gentleman kept his business pretty much to himself, and held forth mainly on subjects directly or indirectly concerned with the next world, as he had planned it. A neophyte might have spent years there, and learnt nothing at all but what he could pick up from labourers on the home farm. There were generally, I believe, two or three young men of responsible age by way of acquiring the secrets of estate management living in the prophet's family, and living very comfortably, too, but what they gleaned of the craft in question I cannot imagine. But the conscience of the Calvinist is not always acute in such matters. To do him justice, they would probably be accounted as trivial compared with the precious privilege of domicile with the godly.

This old gentleman was more or less at odds with the neighbourhood ; on theological grounds with the parsons, even his own, because they had crosses on the altar, or sang the psalms, or followed other normal customs, and with the laity, I presume, because they couldn't be bothered with him. He drove his household some miles on Sunday to sit under a gentleman in a Geneva gown, in a church where none of these popish abominations were observed,

while on his part he mistrusted all society outside the elect. I should have been sorry for a boy under his control. He would have led a solitary and aimless life, and probably signalised his eventual escape from it by performances that would have electrified his parents, his sisters, his cousins, and his aunts.

While I abode, mainly bored, in the tents of the prophet, a Red Indian straight from the shining-big-sea-water, otherwise Lake Superior, in charge of a missionary, paid us a visit, and created a great diversion. He was a brand snatched from the burning, and was being led round, I think, in the interest of foreign missions, and I am sure was splendid business. For he was the real, raw article, and moreover a chief. He had no English and no clothes. I mean no ordinary clothes, but stalked majestically within the folds of a white Hudson Bay blanket. Hiawatha stayed in the house for some days, and sat next to me at table, and was the pink of propriety. I saw a great many Indians on their various native heaths in after days, but was never at such protracted close quarters with one again. The prophet beamed on him with prolonged benignity and admiration, and exchanged sentiments with him through the medium of the missionary, who, let us hope, was a faithful interpreter. The only fly in the ointment was a huge pipe from which Hiawatha blew dense clouds as he paced the lawn. For smoking was one of the prophets' seven deadly sins, for some occult reason. The rustics gaped at the noble savage, through palings and over hedges, with blank amazement and wholesome fear. He ventured out into the road on one occasion, which so intimidated the old cowman that he rushed to the house, crying aloud, 'He 's bruk louse, he 's bruk louse!' The grand finale, however, was when, in a marquee erected in the park, filled with all and sundry, Hiawatha in full paint and feathers, and armed

to the teeth, sang the war-song, and danced the war-dance of the Chippewas with a vigour and abandon that is doubtless remembered to this day by any survivors of the astonished concourse of rustics, who witnessed a performance unprecedented, and I should say unrepeated, in North Wilts.

It was an odd coincidence that took me, this short interlude excepted, from perhaps the best estate in Britain to, I should think at that time, about the worst. At any rate, I have seen a good deal of England at close quarters since those days, and I don't think the description is far amiss. This also was on the fringe of Wiltshire, but at the other extremity, and bordered on the New Forest. Much of it had been for long in the hands of a wealthy family who could afford to regard it from a purely sporting point of view, large though it was. It had recently, however, been united to the property of a well-known peer, and was to be reclaimed. An acquaintance of ours was head agent, and then engaged in endeavours to bring order out of chaos. He invited me to gather particulars for a report which entailed a visitation of every holding large and small, and practically every field upon every holding, and extraction from each tenant of a good deal of detailed information as to past doings for a period of years. It was not a popular enterprise, since the tenantry were generally primitive and prejudiced, and in great part small men who had long worked their own wild will unmolested, providing incidentally heaps of good covert for the sporting requirements of their late landlord.

They were now to be reformed, and as many of them no doubt dimly dreaded to be served with notices to quit, it provided several weeks of interesting intercourse with many and varied rustic characters, of more or less originality. Among them were two or three solitary Amazons, doing all their own work on thirty or forty acre farms, and

these were the most defiantly reticent about their goings-on. The rent dinners, too, were tremendous functions in those days, and had none of the melancholy associations that subsequently gathered round them. I sat out a good many, a feat of endurance easy enough in youth, and well worth the achievement to any one appreciative of the humours of country life. There was an estate to the northwards of this one in South Wilts, where the feast was held in a rustic but resourceful inn on the property, and the givers of it, great friends of mine, were pre-eminently qualified both to stimulate and to enjoy the social treat provided by a large company of middling British farmers forty years ago. These feasts began early and ended late. It was the day of churchwarden pipes, of strong heads and stomachs, of strong old ale, of fruity port and brown brandy, and an uncritical zest for old-fashioned ditties delivered in the vernacular. Even the snuff-box on such occasions still went round.

I remember, on the other hand, a rent dinner under the auspices of the prophet. He couldn't help his chairmanship, but he marked his disapproval of tobacco by leaving before its fumes arose. His shadow, however, lay upon the feast, and it was a comparatively spiritless affair. Alas, alas! what joyless audit dinners were coming in the near future; what hundreds of thousands of pounds in Wiltshire, as elsewhere, were to disappear into downland and lowland in the great debacle; what honoured names in their various spheres were to be broken, what links with the past were to be shattered before the land staggered out of the conflict, chastened and shorn, to take a back seat, and under altered conditions, whether for good or ill, to become the sport of Cockney theorists, the recognised milch cow of budget makers, and the playground of millionaires!

If this book professed to be autobiographical in the

ordinary sense of the word, which, as before intimated, is not its object, I could have said a good deal about Freshwater in the Isle of Wight, just across the narrow strait from here, and the notabilities there encountered in the course of my early years. For my father, while still at Rugby, bought a farm in that parish, and built a residence upon it for holiday uses. And there, for many following years, summer or winter, sometimes both, we made long sojourns. Freshwater, in its connection with the late Lord Tennyson, and the friends that gathered round him there, has been so much written of, I do not feel disposed to add any crumbs of the kind that very naturally help to make up this literature. My parents were great friends, as well as near neighbours, for these annual periods, of the poet and Mrs. Tennyson, and the young people of both families were very intimate and constant playfellows. The possibility of a youth in his 'teens adding anything of value to the wealth and contributions supplied by Tennyson's friends and contemporaries, is manifestly absurd, and I have certainly no idea of touching upon the intimacies of private and domestic life, though they are naturally a pleasure and a privilege to recall.

But one little trifle of the lightest nature may for that very reason perhaps be recorded. I can claim with confidence to be the only person living save one that ever played in a football match with the late Poet-laureate. I was standing on the spot but the other day, with the only other survivor of a contest, otherwise obscure enough, but rather memorable, one might be inclined to say, as the only occasion known to those who should best know on which such a thing, or anything like it, ever occurred, and we recalled the incident with mutual freshness and accuracy of recollection. It so happened in those days of the sixties that we made up quite a group of boys, all ardent football players,

the celebrated Mrs. Cameron—so prominent in that old Freshwater circle—contributing several Carthusian sons who were more than ordinarily skilful. We used to beat up recruits among the few strangers who had by then begun to turn their holiday-steps towards Freshwater—stray curates, university dons, or schoolboys—none came amiss—and play pick-up games on winter afternoons in the park at Farringford. On one occasion the poet and my father were looking on, and I suppose were seized by some sudden fires of youth, for neither of them, it is quite certain, had done such a thing since boyhood, or ever did it again. But, at any rate, they divested themselves of their overcoats, in Lord Tennyson's case one should say of his historic cloak, and joined in the game, one upon either side. The sole survivor, for the rest of the little company, so far as we could remember them, were all dead, agreed with me in the calculation that it was a full ten minutes before our respective fathers, who joined heartily in the fray, were run to a standstill, and retired from the contest.

Having thus crossed the Solent, the reminiscent instinct is too strong. I cannot resist recalling the fact that a parish which is now thickly sprinkled with indiscriminate groups of jerry-built houses, whole streets of them obscuring what I remember as bosky lanes; that is further provided with two watering-places, and various forts which fire big guns that crack ceilings, and even break windows, was then a most sequestered and rural spot. In the fifties, with the exception of Farringford of the Tennysons, Afton, and Norton of the Hammonds, there was practically nothing at all but old-fashioned farmhouses, with their cottages, a couple of hotels at Freshwater Bay, an old inn at the Needles, and an occasional small house inhabited by detached Isle of Wight gentlefolk, or the like. I don't think we had even a postal delivery, as it was certainly part of

my duty as a very small boy to ride to Yarmouth, three miles away, before breakfast, and fetch the letters. The parish is a very large one, some thirteen thousand acres forming the western angle of the island, and almost an island itself, being all but isolated by the tidal river Yar. In those days there was no bridge, and to meet the little paddle-steamer which crossed the Solent to Lymington, we drove to the mouth of the Yar, hailed a fisherman's boat, and were rowed, luggage and all, across the sometimes chopping waters of the harbour to the wharf of the ancient and diminutive borough of Yarmouth, which, save for its bridge and its pier, has not altered one whit since its owners returned two members to Parliament. The rude stone shelter, too, still stands on the river's ragged, sandy edge, which was erected to protect the occasional voyager to England and his effects from storm and stress, till some boatman on Yarmouth Quay espied a fare and rowed across.

Totland Bay was then a perfect solitude, Colwell was the same but for a rude wigwam we ourselves erected for bathing purposes. The great down stretching from Freshwater Bay, where there were then no villas nor lodging-houses, above the noblest chalk cliffs in England, to the Needles, was practically untrodden by any one but the Poet-laureate and his friends. It was a favourite galloping ground of my father's in those early days, though a more gruesome place to be run away with does not exist in all England, as the golfers, who have now taken possession of that high classic ridge, and slice or pull their balls into the vasty deep, hundreds of feet below, can no doubt imagine. Every one going westward to-day down the Solent must be familiar with the woody ridges of Norton, fringing the shore after passing Yarmouth. Here in this northern end of the parish of Freshwater stood, and still stands, two seats of the Hamond family, now Hamond-Graemes. In the fifties,

still living hale and hearty at a great age, was Admiral Sir Graham Hamond, who had served as a post-captain under Nelson at Copenhagen, and knew him well, and was full of stories of that immortal sailor which were a great delight to my father, who used frequently to dine with him. I can myself remember the old gentleman quite well, and an immense Union Jack or Red Ensign that hung in the hall, and was associated in some way with his rank as, I think, 'High Admiral of the Blue.' In those days, too, the old wooden frigates and line-of-battle ships, such as he had sailed and fought in, still went backward and forward to Spithead in front of his windows, and indeed of ours.

One interesting experience of the Admiral's, as told to my father, I must find room for here. During the short peace of 1803 (I presume) he paid a visit to Paris with his newly married wife, and incidentally attended one or more of Bonaparte's levees. He had a French friend or acquaintance at Court, more or less in the secrets of the government. Meeting him on one occasion, the Frenchman among other remarks said: 'When are you leaving Paris?' to which Captain Hamond, as he then was, made some more or less indefinite answer. A week or two afterwards he was conversing with the same Frenchman again, and he rather significantly repeated the query, which the captain thought a little strange, but attributed no particular importance to it. On a third encounter the question was put once more with unmistakable emphasis: '*When* are you leaving Paris?' Upon this the English captain went straight to his quarters, told his young wife, to her surprise and disgust, to bundle all her finery into her trunks with the utmost dispatch, for they would leave Paris that night. He was only just in time. The day after they arrived in England Napoleon's famous proclamation, which detained for years every unfortunate Briton then in the country, was issued.

Napoleon-worship in England in the fifties was not so common as now, certainly not among the old sea-dogs who had fought him. My father, as an intellectual of a younger generation, had, of course, fallen under the spell, and in a moment of enthusiasm at talking to a man who had actually met him face to face used, perhaps, not quite the right word, in remarking that Napoleon must have been very handsome.

'Bonaparte handsome!' shouted the indignant veteran, dropping his ear-trumpet. 'D——d scrofulous little devil!'

These fine ships, with their bristling rows of guns and crowded sails and white lines, are unforgettable, particularly as, in our case, we sailed the Solent a great deal in summer from the Needles to Cowes. Our skipper for several seasons was also a patriarch, an old man-of-war's-man, who had served in youth in the Napoleon wars, and had a strong turn for reminiscence in his slow way. He knew every craft, too, within sight, from the three-decker to the collier, their nation, their qualities, whence they came, and whither they were bound. I can see my father sitting back in the stern in a reefer jacket, with the tiller under his arm, as we rose and fell on a big oily swell outside the Needles, and the old man in a blue jersey and sou'-wester sitting on the edge of the half-deck, facing him, and in his slow, quavering voice—for he had a slight palsy—uttering his simple scraps from the most stirring years of British history. Unvarnished ones, too, were these of his, for he was quite illiterate, and without a spark of imagination or humour. What pearls they would be now! But the Napoleon wars, after all, were nearer to those days than those days are to this present moment of writing, and the talk of men who fought in them, though invested, no doubt, with the special interest that reasonable remote-

ness lends, didn't yet sound in the least as voices from the grave.

The old Freshwater church, at that time, served the whole parish from Yarmouth to the Needles. A hand-organ and a cock-and-hen choir in the gallery furnished the music—hymns and the Gloria only, I think—tremendous in volume, I well remember, if unavoidably restricted in repertoire. A dry, scholarly white-haired rector, with round rosy face and gold spectacles, preached very long sermons from beneath a canopy sounding-board. There was a terrible moment once, when just as the venerable cleric, who sometimes officiated in a surplice, had ascended the pulpit steps, and the last lusty efforts of the aerial choir and grind organ had died away into silence, the penetrating voice of a female infant was heard from our pew, which was just under the pulpit, demanding of all and sundry within hearing, otherwise about half the congregation, whether 'Dr. Goulburn was going to bed.' Rugby Chapel once or twice had been the said infant's sole experience so far of public worship. The canopy and the surplice combined had been too much, and betrayed her into this infelicitous demonstration of astonishment. The aged admiral and his lady, who were in the adjoining pew, were the only persons, —and fortunately so—within a wide range who preserved their gravity; for they were both extremely deaf, and had not yet hoisted their ear trumpets.

I must close these few trifles regarding the Freshwater of olden days, now so utterly transformed, with a little romance in real life, that I feel needs no apology to the reader for the telling, nor again to the actors in it, as they are beyond the reach of one. The fact that my father owned a farm in the parish has been alluded to, and in regard to the idyll with which it was concerned, it must be further stated that the tenants of it were, and more or less still are,

a family of indigenous Isle of Wight name and origin, small farmers of the upright, industrious, prosperous, self-respecting type. They were a large household, and several of the girls came successively, when old enough, into my mother's service for brief periods before starting their respective careers in life. One of them, the cleverest of the capable children of a singularly capable and industrious mother, apprenticed herself, after being with us for a year, to a country milliner, and thence, after a time, proceeded into one of the largest establishments in the West End of London. There, in a few years, and still hardly in middle life, she rose by sheer cleverness and natural wits to be head of the show department, and altogether a person of authority and distinction. She also, it might be added, enjoyed no small advantages of face and figure, as well as of brains. It so came to pass that having achieved this position, she was spending one of her annual holidays abroad, I think in Italy, but at any rate she there encountered and fascinated an Italian count—not a bogus one, but the genuine article. What is more, he was a well-endowed one, and better even than that he was a very perfect gentleman, and I think it will be conceded that the young woman was in the main essentials not behind him in delicacy of feeling. For when he proposed marriage to a well-dressed Englishwoman, whose business associations had been a continuous school, no doubt, for a clever girl of great natural ability, in manners and bearing, he was no doubt surprised when she informed him of the status of her people. She did more than this, however, for she refused to accept him till he had taken a journey to the Isle of Wight and seen the situation for himself. The count protested that he was marrying the lady for herself, and was quite indifferent as to the position of her people; but to satisfy her he undertook the journey, stayed at the little Freshwater farm and made himself entirely at home,

and won the hearts of all the family, from the old lady down. The marriage turned out a complete success. The count had a house in Rome and an estate in the country, but every summer regularly for years, till the fine old woman at the farmhouse died, he came over there for a month or so with the two children that were born to them, and led the simple life. His mother-in-law and her family were simply devoted to him, and he to them. He is dead now, though his wife, I think, still lives, and a young count reigns in his stead. I think it will be conceded that this little idyll in real life is worthy of record.

CHAPTER VIII

CANADA IN THE SEVENTIES

I HAVE written so many books on Canada, past and present, I propose to devote very little of this one to the subject. But a few recollections of that country as it was in the first half of the seventies may not be amiss, having regard to the prodigious transformation which has since overtaken it. To begin with, the North-West was in those days practically non-existent. Lord Wolseley's expedition in 1869 had suppressed a serious rebellion of the half-breeds, and helped to bring this remote region within, at any rate, earshot of the public. 'The Red River,' as it was commonly called when I first knew Canada, had just been formed into the province of Manitoba. The straggling village around the old Fort Garry had been renamed Winnipeg, but everything beyond it was a *terra incognita* to all but the fur traders. There was much talk, however, about the magnificent wheat lands, whose fringes had been rudely cultivated for years by half-breed employees of the Hudson Bay Company and a few other settlers. Winnipeg, with a thousand or so inhabitants of sorts, was vaguely and sometimes confidently spoken of as the nucleus of a great future city, but scarcely any one backed their opinions in practical fashion.

The stories of its winter temperature were of the tallest. The condition of the little town was represented as elementary in the extreme, if not worse. The way thither from Canada lay by desolate lakes and through barren forest wastes, and with the partial help of small steamers

consumed nearly three weeks in the accomplishment. There was as yet no means of transporting such produce as might there be grown to market. The railroad, to be sure, had been promised by one political party, but it was laughed at as an absurdity by the other. In any case it would be a lengthy and stupendous undertaking. It was completed, however, as we all know, and that, too, within a dozen years of the time I write of. The prospect held out in these early days was that of acquiring lands cheap and possessing your soul in patience till such time as communications with the outer world might, or might not, be established. The glamour of an unknown and illimitable prairie, with some undoubtedly picturesque accessories, hung over it. Everybody advised his neighbour to go there, but nobody went himself, the prospect of utter banishment for a problematical term of years, and sixty below zero, was too intimidating. An attractive book, *The Great Lone Land*, by the late Sir William Butler, had been in much request by readers in England, which may, or may not, have inspired a few adventurous souls to action.

For example, on writing from home to an old schoolfellow, a lawyer in Ontario, for some information, he replied that he did not know any more about the Red River country than I did. He is now the senior senator at Ottawa for that region! I came across one or two people, however, who had actually been up there, and later on in Canada a great many who had been with Wolseley's expedition, and were irretrievably bitten. I should most assuredly have been there in 1874 but for an unexpected turn in my affairs. As it was, I did not see that country till ten years later. I merely mention these matters as illustrating the nebulous condition of the Canadian West of that day in the minds of men. Emigration from Britain to Canada, which, from the period following Waterloo till the early sixties, had been steady and considerable, touching

high-water mark at 50,000 about 1834, had slacked off by the sixties. The fertile lands of Ontario—for the other provinces had always been comparatively neglected—were virtually all cleared and occupied, and in the meantime the rich American prairies had been made accessible. There was no longer any special opening for a British labourer in Canada, except rather better wages than at home. The timbered free-grants left were not worth having so far as could be seen and known, while the price of improved farms under high markets had risen to a figure that offered no advantage to the small outside capitalist, with the world to choose from. Manufacturing was in its infancy, and so there was nothing definitely alluring to the emigrant of any class, though several thousand found their way in every year to various openings in life. But Canada in its character of a new country seemed finished. It might grow and prosper as an old country does, but there were apparently no virgin territories left sufficiently fertile to be worth the prodigious labour of clearing, and the Canadian West, as I have said, was not yet recognised. Into the American West, however, Europeans of all sorts were swarming, and thousands of Canadians born were annually swelling the tide.

Quite small steamers represented the ocean traffic to Canada in those days. My first voyage was on an Allan liner of 2700 tons, and she carried the mails and took fifteen days to reach Portland. It was the most active month of the year, too, when nowadays many huge steamers carrying a thousand passengers each leave British ports weekly for the Dominion. We carried about forty in the saloon, and perhaps two hundred in the steerage, and were, I think, the only boat sailing that week! There was assuredly more romance in the Westward Ho! business in those days.

An incident was provided upon this occasion. The first

person who attracted my notice, while the steamer was still in the Mersey, was an elderly gentleman passenger of distinguished appearance, and, as it afterwards proved, of buoyant deportment and temperament. He very easily became the leading personage of the company during the long voyage, and even the captain bade him an almost affectionate farewell at Portland. His business in Canada was of mysterious, but obviously of weighty import. In moments of confidence he exhibited photographs of his wife and family, from which the pressure of great affairs was reluctantly tearing him for a few weeks. I venture to think that the most astute would never have doubted his *bona fides* for a moment. But the mark he made on board ship was as nothing compared to the popularity he achieved subsequently in a certain Canadian country town, then of great social repute, where I met him again myself. And though I admit to some passing surprise at his gallivanting there instead of interviewing bankers and merchants in Montreal or Toronto, one is not prone to suspicion in the early twenties.

At any rate, he had captured the town, and it lacked neither breeding nor worldly knowledge, and was even then not unacquainted with impostors. At the club and the houses of the local aristocracy—for Canada in those days was still particular and exclusive—he was indispensable. Commercial enterprise set its cap at him as he was understood to represent English capital and influence. He looked it, too, and played the part superbly. There was a sanguine mining company, I remember, a rare kind of venture in those days in Ontario, whose hopes and expectations lay a hundred miles up in the back country. The directors organised a special expedition in honour of our influential friend, and took him up there with a great to-do, and were much gratified when he expressed his entire confidence in

their prospects, and almost undertook to raise the necessary among his English friends.

At the end of a rather protracted visitation he expressed a burning desire to make some small acknowledgment for all the civilities he had received, and issued invitations to a banquet at the principal hotel, which he made his headquarters, to the great gratification of the proprietor, who had apparently not thought it worth while for some time to render his account. The dinner was a tremendous success. About forty covers were laid, and as I happened to be in the town I was included in his list. As a host he was perfection. The speeches in his honour were cordial, and his own most affecting and fluent, being in the nature of a farewell. The music, though amateur, was abundant. The next morning he hired a buggy from the hotelkeeper, for a two or three days' trip, in which he deposited a portmanteau, leaving his trunks in his room, a procedure which seemed perfectly normal. But he never returned. The buggy was left at livery at a distant station on the Grand Trunk, and the hotel proprietor was left lamenting the loss of several weeks' board and residence. The abandoned trunks contained his oldest garments and a good deal of rubbish. Many other people would have liked to see him again, but nobody ever did. He vanished into space. It must have been his last fling, as it undoubtedly was his first in the character of a fraudulent adventurer. He had no money, and no prospect of ever getting any. For many years afterwards I was in his old neighbourhood in England, and heard his story, which was quite commonplace, though he himself was certainly not so. He had apparently developed in middle life a weakness for display beyond his means, had, in time, exhausted these, left England, his debts, and his family behind him, according to my informant, never to be seen again. He must then

have been nearly sixty, endowed with the face and carriage of a Roman senator, the buoyancy and apparent tastes of an English country squire, and a bit of the man of the world and of letters thrown in. It was a strange exit for an amateur of this type. He staggered that Canadian country town to its foundations, and was a great deal more than a nine-days' wonder. Its faith in human nature, with a noble bearing, from the old country received a frightful shock.

Toronto was then in many respects a country town, though boasting of 60,000 inhabitants, a sixth of its present population. It had still plank side-walks, and exhaled the resinous woody odour that is peculiar to the smaller towns of Canada. Some of its leading families still dined in the middle of the day, and drank tea at every meal. But it was in reality far more aristocratic than now, with all its modern luxury and millionaires. The country was still poor, and the incomes of its leading people were singularly modest. Money had not begun to count, socially. The old traditions of the Family Compact and the retired officer still lingered in Toronto and the country towns of what was still generally called *Upper Canada*, despite the recently bestowed designation of *Ontario*. The old leading families of the United Empire loyalists, the American refugees that is to say, who made English Canada, were still to the fore. The element of half-pay officers who flocked into the country after Waterloo, and later, was still conspicuous in the second generation. These and other people of similar type all combined to draw a line in social life that has been long obliterated by industrial prosperity, the spread of higher education, and democratic ideas. A city like Toronto, of course, still cherishes grades and cliques like every other, and despite the millionaire those of the old families who ran the country in the old days, and still keep their heads

up, have even yet no doubt some prestige. But it is in the small country towns of Canada, with at that time some two to five thousand souls, but now often multiplied many times by industrial activity, where the change is so drastic. They were then little market towns for the agricultural districts, with occasionally some further milling and lumbering interests of modest capacity.

Many of the pleasantest stood on the shores of Lakes Ontario, Erie, and Huron. They were the strongholds outside the capitol of the old Anglo-Canadian upper class and quiet residential havens, which combined simplicity of life with sociability to a marked degree. Most of these people were engaged in avocations of some kind, though there was a certain leaven of the retired officer or the English civilian of small independent means. For living was then extremely cheap in Canada, and a great deal was to be got out of a small fixed income. Practically no people of this class lived upon farms, or made farming a serious business, nor have they ever done so. It was no fit calling there for the educated man. The entire country was cultivated in farms of one to two hundred acres by horny-handed freeholders, sons of toil, who, with their fathers and grandfathers, had done very well for themselves within such narrow limits, and having regard to their usual origin. These last were in part sprung from those American loyalist refugees who, whether of humble or better origin, had remained on the land from the early grants in 1783, from Americans of the working type who had flocked in immediately afterwards for the sake of cheap land, or from the still thicker importations after the Napoleon wars of English, Scottish, Ulster, and Irish Catholic peasants. But in any case all were welded into a type who laboured from daylight till dark, and more than any rural class I ever encountered, made unremitting manual toil their fetish and their god. Magnificent citizens

in the bulk beyond doubt for a new country, but individually, both as regards the men and the hard-worked housewives, joyless, material, dour folks, with rarely a particle of saving grace in manner or bearing.

Well-built homesteads, a fast horse and buggy, money in the bank, or on mortgage, made not a shadow of difference in their stern, laborious habits, and their frugality within-doors. It seemed as if the iron of the grim old struggling days of their fathers and grandfathers in the woods had entered into their very souls, and that its shadow brooded over the well-appointed farms which studded the Ontario landscape, and made it pleasant and homelike to behold. In former days, when this country was virgin from the woods, it had produced continuous and heavy crops of wheat, and put comparatively handsome sums of money into the hands of its owners as they hewed their way into the wilderness with feverish energy. Hence the good houses and fences and buildings, and the tidy little sums in the bank of many a close-fisted farmer. But in the seventies that was done with. A hundred-acre farm was practically identical, and received the same treatment, and grew the same shift of crops as one in Essex ; the only difference being that the Canadian farmer was both proprietor and labourer himself, toiling from dawn till dark, while his hired man, if, failing a grown son or two, he kept one, had to go step and step with him. To do the latter justice, if a Canadian, he asked for nothing less, but he is now extinct.

In those days a pride in sheer manual achievement and a positive hatred of spending money in anything his narrow code thought superfluous, were the dominant note of the Canadian farmer. It is so still, but to a less degree. The amenities of life have invaded even that grim yeomanry, while in agricultural science they have advanced amazingly. But after all, the limitations to success in a hundred acres

are obvious. And amid such an environment—a not over genial one either to a person with the mark of gentility upon him—it is not surprising that no educated Canadian of that type, with the necessary capital of say a couple of thousand pounds, ever dreamed of devoting it and his life's work to the career of a farmer. He would have been regarded as a lunatic by all his friends. He and his ran the professions and the higher commerce of the country and lived in towns, and had a great capacity for social enjoyment, knowing nothing of the farmers, outside business transactions, and desiring to know nothing. His womenfolk had as often as not never been inside a farmhouse in their lives. The farmers belonged to another world from the upper class, whether in the big or the little town. It is the simple truth that their rude and frugal ways, their passion for unremitting toil, were matters of proverbial, and not over kindly, ridicule with these others. There were individual exceptions to the type, and even little groups here and there, particularly in the fruit districts, that would not answer to this description. But such were much too scarce to affect the balance of social grades. Things are much the same to-day, though somewhat modified. But the impatience of the sons and daughters of Ontario farmers, with their narrow, joyless, toilsome lives, has been a burning question ever since I can remember, and for such altogether obvious reasons!

With all this isolation from the more joyous living classes in the towns, the Ontario farmer has been steadily and continuously recruiting these others, and many of the best men in Canada have come as boys from Ontario homesteads to the university, which is inexpensive, and into the professions, or direct into some business, there to rise and prosper. Such a man, however, would never dream of putting his son back on the land, while that young gentle-

man himself would most assuredly resent being thus disposed of. No educated Canadian or American regards a life of manual labour as anything but throwing away the advantages he has inherited or acquired. It is not there, as in the large English farm, where the owner walks or rides about in civilised clothes, controlling labour, nor yet like a western ranch, with a picturesque life and visible potentialities for expansion. The educated Canadian is proud enough to point to the well-ordered landscape of Ontario, and allude to what his agricultural compatriots have achieved. But he himself despises farming as a pursuit, and never could understand why English gentlemen, as hundreds have done, mostly to regret it, could bring themselves to become farmers in Ontario, though as a preliminary school for western farming it is the best in America.

All these things are not set down in print. On the contrary, they are concealed, but they are the salient social facts of Canadian life nevertheless. There is no glamour about the farmhouse there. Official publications and lecturers never tire of inviting Englishmen of some capital 'to become their own landlords' on an Ontario farm, surrounded, as they say, by all 'the refinements of civilisation.' This is true enough, except as regards the neighbours. They hint at hard work, meaning twelve and fourteen hours of manual labour a day. They do not tell their hearers or readers that their wives will have to do all the cooking, washing, and housework, and that indoor help is unprocurable. Above all, they do not tell them that no Canadian of the class they are inviting dreams of doing this thing; that the English newcomer would find himself surrounded by neighbours, on the same financial scale perhaps as himself, but without a single idea in common; and furthermore, that the Canadians he would naturally forgather with all live in the towns, and would feel sorry for him,

and wonder why he does it, without any possibility of making money, and no slight one of losing it. There is not even the attraction of sport in country life in older Canada; for that is all in the remote backwoods. There has never been anything there resembling a country gentry. The 'classes,' to borrow a convenient English shibboleth, have always rejected the land. It was useless to them, and they have gathered in towns since the earliest days of the country.[1] The exceptions have generally been enthusiasts from the Old Country, with the glamour attaching to British land fresh upon them, both in the pioneering and in the later days, and as farmers they have generally been failures. Yet no part of North America has a more substantial and valuable yeomanry, nor is any part, as a whole, better farmed than Western Ontario. But the rôle of an Ontario farmer can only be played by the type which the nature of the country and circumstances have long stereotyped. A hard-working Briton, to be sure, may, and sometimes does, put the necessary £2000 or thereabout into such a career, but *cui bono*? He would use his capital and energy to better purpose on a larger farm at home, and lead less laborious days, both indoors and out, in an atmosphere, social and industrial, with which he was familiar. Higher taxation is counterbalanced by higher market prices and much cheaper labour. The be-your-own-landlord on a farm that, unlike those of a western country, will not rise in value is a mere sentiment voiced by townsmen at home or by Colonial officials who don't understand English land-matters. The practical farmer understands facts and figures, and more often than not would refuse to sink his capital and, as an old Ontario saying had it, to be 'married to a farm.'

[1] These matters are dealt with at length in my *Making of Canada, 1761-1815*, and *Canada in the Twentieth Century*.

In the country towns of the seventies, however, life was almost picturesquely pleasant. There was a judge and half a dozen lawyers, two or three families concerned with lumbering and saw-mills, as many doctors and clergymen, together with a large staff of the branches of the great banks which are the pride of Canada. And these clerks and managers were all gentlemen in those days, many of them members of the best families in the country. The incomes from most other callings were then so modest that the bank salaries enabled their officials to hold their own, besides enjoying a certain social prestige, which, odd as it may seem to an English reader, attached to service in these great corporations. I cannot elaborate these things here, but in the Canada of those days there were a large number of families coming down from United Empire loyalist days, possessing a status due to past leadership and often present influence in the various walks of life—social, political, legal, or military—who made up a kind of aristocracy. There were many others of breeding and education, either English-born or of the first generation, who had naturally fused with them. In most of these little towns there were some households of this latter type either living on their means, or interested in local ventures and occupations.

The social line was drawn pretty sharply then, not very precisely by occupation, but rather by instinct and common sense. A man was a gentleman, or the other thing, as in older countries, though, of course, with less outspoken application. The womenfolk saw to all this, and though I do not wish to touch on history here, the origin of this British style of discrimination dated back to the Tory refugees from the American provinces, who, after fighting for the Crown through the Revolutionary war, had come to the wilds of Canada, and poverty, with a deep hatred of that new democracy and all its works which arose upon the ruin

of their fortunes. Moreover, the British garrisons which, till 1871, lay all about the colony in great force, helped to maintain and foster these social standards, and an exclusiveness that in this sense of the word is now absolutely dead. All this survived when I first knew Canada, as a matter of course, and not, I think, as a cause of bitterness, together with a distinct English flavour in society. But there was a certain charm about the whole thing due to the absence of wealth and the unostentatious frank simplicity of life, which was essentially un-English. Most of the old families have now gone under, or been swamped by the rise to wealth of those who, in former days, did not, to be sure, 'touch their hats,' but had no pretension to social recognition, or indeed possessed any qualifications for it.

The country towns nowadays are full of far more elegant residences, and much richer people. There is not perhaps much ostentation, for the simple reason that there are very few servants to be had. I dare say at a bachelor's ball the company would be superficially quite up-to-date. But the dancers would be for the most part of quite different origin, and very different tradition to the couples who footed it, and the fathers and mothers who looked on forty years ago. Not one educated Englishman in ten thousand realises that English Canada was originally a great military colony; that it was founded by the irregular regiments that had fought through a long and cruel war, and that the officers of these regiments, to a great extent, provided in themselves and their children the political leaders, nay, almost the political autocrats, of the colony for fifty years. Nearly everybody I know seems to think that Canada was founded higgledy-piggledy by relays of British emigrants, like New Zealand, for instance. I am quite certain that three-fourths even of the gentlemen who take the chair, and make big speeches in London on the greatness of the Dominion,

and even twit their audience with a regrettable indifference to such things, have themselves but the foggiest notions of how Canada came into being. I feel confident that most of them would be surprised to learn that half a century after it became British, but before any British-born settlers to speak of, but a few thousand expatriated Highlanders, had ever landed on their shores, the colony fought a bloody and successful three-years' war against the United States.

The tradition of all this, though weakening, was still alive in Canadian society forty years ago. That distinguished Canadian lawyer and statesman, the late Mr. Edward Blake, a very fount of authority in all that concerns old Toronto life, once told me that he could remember perfectly when the election of a man in wholesale trade to that famous and still flourishing institution, the Toronto Club, was regarded as a startling innovation! But this would have been some sixty years ago. The society of these small towns was, even when I first knew them, intimately connected with that of the capital, which itself still led the comparatively simple life. Nowadays, when externals count for nearly everything, the fashionable Toronto person will allude to the present social condition of one of these country towns, rich and prosperous though they may be, with the sniff you would expect. In old days there was nothing of this. Money, such as there was of it, didn't count. There was a kind of freemasonry in Canadian society which was very closely interconnected, and it did not matter whether its members lived in one of the roomy old-fashioned residences you may still see standing here and there in Toronto, or in a six-roomed, verandahed wooden villa at Woodstock, Coburg, or Port Hope.

Every vestige of such conditions has long been utterly submerged. British Canada, in fact, was then far less American than now, though its founders had been Americans, and

most of its leading families were of American origin. The gentle-folk of Ontario in those days, which any one can verify, as there are still thousands of them living, had, generally speaking, a more pleasing voice, accent, and intonation than their present representatives, certain circles in modern Toronto always excepted. The common accent of forty years ago was as hideous and as frankly American of the common eastern type as it is to-day. But to-day, unfortunately, it permeates the better classes, to the outspoken disgust of their fathers and mothers—the ladies, however, for some inscrutable reason, being far the least offenders. It is not quite 'the middle-west,' nor yet the pure New England accent. Some Canadian writers have advanced theories for its lamentable peculiarities—Irish nurses being one of them, but it is not a popular theme! The letter *r*, as emphasised by the masses, is the greatest terror in this vernacular. It is a queer travesty of the dear old burred *r* of the South Saxon rustic, though it didn't come from him, and instead of being soft and mellow like his, it sounds as if it came first through the nose, and then through a tube of brass. Have you ever, dear reader, heard a transatlantic train-conductor call out 'All aboard'? If you have, you will know the dreadful thing.

Camping-out amid the network of lakes, rivers, and forests that comprise the Canadian hinterland was then in a primitive way, as it is now on a far greater and more elaborate scale, a popular form of holiday-making. This was, and indeed is, almost the only form of country life that society in Canada has any connection with. At pitching a camp, paddling a canoe, and such woodcraft as travelling, hunting, and fishing in the forest demands, great numbers of them, lawyers, bankers, doctors, and half-pay officers were extremely proficient. Handling a loaded birch-bark, or basswood canoe in dangerous rapids, or in crossing choppy lakes

a mile wide, against a wind, was a very different business from sitting up on the back thwart, with the bow cocked in the air, and drifting about the Thames on a summer day, which seems to be the sole and ignoble end of the Canadian canoe in this country. Some of the girls and young women were remarkably handy, both in the woods and on the waters, and often indeed in them, swimming like ducks. The early autumn, when the mosquito curse had abated, and the terrible 'black-fly' had disappeared, was the season, and is still the season, for such recreations. The back country of Ontario is virtually illimitable. It has no 'beyond,' and pushes northward into semi-arctic space, a perfect network everywhere of tangled forest and clear waters. In those old days camping parties had merely to penetrate its southern fringe to enjoy the perfect solitude of the wilderness. But the Americans have long discovered this boundless playground. Summer hotels, cottages, and lodges stand upon the once desolate shores and islets, while launches plough the waters of lakes that I remember as wholly virgin but for some chance tent of a deer-hunter in later autumn. This wild, silent, shaggy land completely fascinated me, and I spent several months wandering through it with a friend or two, a tent and a canoe, fishing a little always, and shooting as the opportunities occurred: a pleasure that, in smaller doses, was to be repeated in after years.

I spent two or three weeks in early summer with a Canadian backwoods settler, who had done his first chopping in the past winter, and a chaos of prostrate trees still covered the five- or six-acre opening in the forest around his rude log-house. With a view to acquiring a reasonable proficiency with the Canadian axe, a weapon then almost indispensable to every phase of North American outdoor life, I stuck at it all day long with the old man and his son, as dismal a pair of companions as have ever fallen to my lot.

They were getting ready for their logging-bee, a function which came off during my stay, and attended by a dozen or so of their neighbours from other lonely clearings, bringing various yokes of oxen, which in those days did all the draught work in the woods. Fire had previously been set to the prostrate trees, and left in its track a hideous charred confusion of trunks and limbs. The former are hauled together by the oxen and a heavy lock-chain, while the portable stuff is borne on men's shoulders. The trunks and limbs are then heaved into position and piled on one another by laborious handspike work, ready for further bonfires, and all this on ground bristling thick with obstructing stumps waist high. As the work has to be accomplished within the day the pressure is tremendous, and when the backwoodsman is 'on the jump,' his energy and endurance are amazing, if his language is, or was, something awful. There was not much future in those poor stony backwoods homesteads, though the arduous process of redemption was the same that had distinguished the march of civilisation in the more fertile regions of Ontario. These folks were in truth half farmers and half 'shantymen,' *i.e.* employees in the lumber camps, and these little farms were their *pieds-à-terre*. The shantymen proper, whom one constantly encountered in the wilderness, were the most repellent human beings it has ever been my lot to meet. The 'mean whites' of the Southern States are almost gentlemen compared to them. I have been told that they have of late improved, but an account of a winter in a lumber camp, recently published by a young Englishman I know very well, doesn't support this opinion. At any rate, to hear them in those days was quite enough. At a logging-bee they were perhaps at their best—or worst. The straining oxen were driven by volumes of senseless and filthy blasphemy, imprecations so elaborate and so appalling as almost to suggest a touch of genius in

minds that, outside a knowledge of trees from the sawlog point of view, were as vacant as an eggshell. Rye-whisky flowed liberally and traditionally towards the close of these occasions, and there was certainly some excuse, for the labour was arduous beyond even their ordinary day's experience, and was, moreover, voluntary. For myself, I felt it a point of honour, being young and presumably foolish, but in wonderful condition, to keep going to the end, and to this day can recall the waxing burden of the handspike upon my tender and unaccustomed shoulders.

We penetrated, I dare say, a hundred miles back into the shaggy wilderness, and camped on lakes that I do not think even now are often reached, save by a few deer-hunters, and upon others less remote, but then lonely enough, though now bearing the obvious mark of the periodical holiday-maker. There is an indefinable charm about this Canadian back country. The dry, balmy, resinous breezes that blow across the ruffled lakes; the camp-fire on the often chill summer nights, blazing high with dry driftwood, and shooting its thousands of sparks up into the black, mysterious void above. The ceaseless chorus of the crickets, the deep booming of the bull-frogs, the weird shrieks of the loon, the dark wall of the everlasting forest safe for all measurable time up in those semi-sterile regions from the destroyer's hand. The sense that there is nothing but this to the northward, till even such shaggy verdure withers away into arctic wastes of everlasting snow, holds the imagination. Later on, too, in the colder autumn nights, you could still occasionally hear the dismal chorus of a pack of wolves hot upon the trail of a deer.

The wild scenery of the Eastern Canadas has most charms that primitive forests and waters both still and rapid, in ever close and inseparable relationship, can offer. The vista up or down a clear, rocky river hemmed in by walls of spruce,

birch, or hemlock is always beautiful. So, too, must ever be a glassy or a ruffled lake curving in and out of woody promontories, and sprinkled with feathered rocky islets. But, on the other hand, these scenes repeat themselves for ever. There is practically no variety for hundreds of miles, unless for an occasional lapse into complete sterility, where scrub timber barely covers the savage rock, and that is a change for the worse. More forbidding still are those great stretches which far-raging forest fires have transformed into dismal wastes of charred and blackened poles. There are no mountains and no hills of consequence between the Laurentians below Quebec, and Lake Huron to the west of Ontario. The view is nearly always bounded by the opposite shores of the waterway upon which you may be. Such a prospect is at its best when low hills clad with hard-wood such as maple, beech, hickory, and the like dip their foliage to the water ; at their worst if the lake shores are flat and clad with pine. The forest primæval, in Canada particularly, has many artistic blemishes. From the water-logged shores of many lakes whole battalions of dead, naked trees rear their unsightly forms. The isolated skeletons of others, the gaunt ghosts of once lusty pines or hemlocks, constantly smirch the soft symmetry of the forest drapery, or lift the spiky tops of their bare poles in painful contrast against the sky above the soft line of verdure. Often, too, the woods that most please the eye, and throw the most shapely shadows on the lake, are in themselves an impenetrable jungle, the haunt of myriads of mosquitoes till the approach of autumn tempers their rage.

It is only then that the world and his wife, American and Canadian, seek the fringes, or if adventurous, more than the fringes of these northern wilds. I myself encountered the mosquitoes and the still worse black-fly throughout the whole period of their worst orgies, and shall never forget

it. No sane person thus tortures himself unless compelled by lumbering or mining interests to go into the wilderness between May and August. But then youth is not always sane, and the glamour of this boundless land, with an opportunity of penetrating it that might not again occur (though many did) was too much. I have always been thankful, however, that I did this apparently foolish thing.

I have had to follow with my pen upon the trail of many a marching army in the long-ago through the wild woods of North-eastern America, and war could not wait till the leaves were turning and the flies had gone. Though I saw plenty of the American forest later on, and under less arduous conditions, the memory of these months has been invaluable to a full appreciation of those primæval scenes which it has so often been my task to fill upon the printed page, with the laborious march of much-enduring armies. And even if one cannot do this much for one's readers, one can at least oneself keep step in fancy with the harassed general, the long-suffering, gaitered, pipe-clayed Tommy, along their toilsome ways, or feel to the full the skill and daring of the hardy ranger, and understand the deadly nature of an Indian ambush. What little there was of humanity in this far back country, unlike some others, was painfully at odds with the frame of mind it was calculated to inspire. Happily one didn't see too much of it. But a camp-fire in those days was a tolerably sure draw to any lonely settler within sight of its smoke, and sometimes to the shantymen whose rafts of logs were constantly drifting on their long way towards 'the Front' and the great lakes. I never actually witnessed an encounter between a pair of these gentry, but they were conducted on the barbarous system which seems to have held good in the North American back country, from the Carolinas to Canada, and included such amenities as the gouging out of eyes and the biting off of noses and ears.

There were other kinds of people, however, hidden away here and there in these woods. One of them was a hermit of the most complete and approved type, a Trinity Dublin scholar of some repute, I believe, in his earlier life. Tradition had it that when a tutor in the Old Country he had fallen hopelessly in love with his employer's daughter, and that blighted affection had reduced him to the career of a recluse, which he had pursued for years, seeing and speaking to no one. We used occasionally to get a glimpse of him in his boat, but he always disappeared with haste at the approach of a canoe.

In a log-house on a ten-acre clearing by the shores of a remote lake, was another character whose acquaintance I made from the unique opportunity afforded of procuring fresh butter and eggs. This was a singularly well-built, and handsome man of barely middle age. Such of his sunburnt face as was visible for the mass of unkempt hair that covered it was most prepossessing, and his manner frank and vivacious. Formerly a captain in a crack line regiment, he had come out from England some years previously with a sister, a quite dashing widow, so people said who had then known her. The money vanished, I suppose, and the couple went up into the woods. The lady married a decent but quite common backwoodsman, with a small clearing, and when we used to buy eggs and butter of her, she was virtually undistinguishable from any other bush-whacker's wife, and seemed altogether in keeping with her obscure and humble lot. The brother who lived with them, however, had remained a gentleman, though he had the physique, endurance, and all the accomplishments, and quite the appearance, of the regular backwoodsman, and was, in short, an extraordinarily fine specimen of a man physically. When a little money was wanted, he worked out as a shanty-man in the lumber camps, or went down the country to the

saw-mills and earned a dollar a day as a hand. He seemed, however, perfectly happy, regretting nothing. I found him still there some years afterwards, earning money as a guide to American sportsmen, who had by then discovered this country. As civilisation crept nearer him, he became quite a well-known character, and the next time I was up there, a decade later, he waved his hat to us from the proud elevation of a lock-keeper, as he let our little steamer through.

A much more melancholy, but more commonplace spectacle, too, I remember at a remote backwoods tavern, devoted to bad whisky (which was then sold everywhere at five cents a half-tumblerful) and to the orgies of shanty-men, namely that of an ex-captain of artillery and scion of a well-known family, who was there drinking himself to death on a pittance. In his worn-out clothes and hopeless outlook, he still plumed himself on a really remarkable resemblance to Napoleon III., and shaved every day, when his hand was steady enough, to keep up this unappreciated pose to the end, which was obviously near. But even in the civilised parts of Canada there was in those days a great deal of drinking, and numbers of promising men died of it in their prime.

The military spirit was always fervent among the Anglo-Canadians of the older stocks. In addition to the martial nature of their original settlement, the war of 1812 was still within the memory of old people. The English garrisons, moreover, had helped to keep alive the spirit of the drum and trumpet, and scores of Canadian girls had married British officers. But in the seventies the defence of the country had just been handed over to the volunteer forces, and though these have since been vastly improved, as well as concerned with active service in South Africa, there was a good deal of interest even then in the annual camps, where, for two or three weeks, the forces of the different districts

were assembled for duty. At one of these I was privileged to behold a quite unforgettable spectacle. It was the last day of the training, and that of the grand inspection by the general commanding in Upper Canada. All the local world was there, in carriages, buggies, or afoot, to the number, I dare say, of two or three thousand, and as many troops, both infantry and cavalry, the former in the scarlet of the British line, the dragoons in blue, with white facings and jack-boots. The general was long overdue, through a lagging train from Toronto, and both the crowd and the troops were impatient. At last he drove up in all his glory of gold lace, decorations, cocked hat and feathers, a stout little man with short fat legs. There was then another slight hitch, for the horse specially provided for him had somehow miscarried, and it was now the dreadful thing happened. My brother-in-law, who was an officer in the local troop of dragoons, had an English groom of much character and originality—too much, in fact. But, as ill-luck had it, this worthy was present in the crowd, with a spare horse, not intended, however, for military purposes, and quite destitute of any such experience. In the hurry of the moment, however, he took it upon himself to provide the general with a mount which would have carried him admirably back to the station, but was not calculated to confront with equanimity, and at close quarters, a *feu de joie*. So the portly little man, obviously no horseman, though indeed no skill in that line would have availed him much, struggled on to the back of the quiet, well-mannered bay mare, and rode out in front of the troops. The operations of the day were to begin with a general fusillade of blank cartridge, I presume in the way of a salute. At any rate, I was standing pretty near, and can only remember the crash of musketry from the companies in front of me, and seeing, like everybody else, when the smoke lifted, the rotund general sitting upon the ground, and his horse standing

in dazed and bewildered fashion beside him. The mare had, in fact, crumpled up under him in her terror, or to be precise, sat down like a dog, and her illustrious rider had slid over her tail. The humour of the thing was altogether too much for the crowd, but it was terrible for the general, who, however, gallantly scrambled on to some more reliable war-horse, and performed his august duties without further misadventure.

The Irish Catholics have never played any conspicuous part in Canadian life, though they are pretty strong in numbers. They have for the most part, I think, attended to their business like other people, and not spent half their time in the orgies of political bossism and cracking their heels at the Old Country. For one thing, the Orange interest in Ontario has been always predominant, and disloyal manifestations would have been promptly quashed. The fact that this kind of thing would not be tolerated in Canada has been entirely wholesome. It has discouraged the Irishman from those gregarious vices which have, in some respects, made him a political curse to the United States. He has not wasted his days and his nights in vapouring against Great Britain, or in the far more harmful occupation of actively promoting and enthusiastically supporting the types of political depravity that have made the great American cities the political Sodoms and Gomorrahs of the earth.

There has been municipal corruption in Canada, to be sure, particularly in French Canada, but the cartoon of the newspaper does not depict the villain of the job as an Irishman, which would be a mere matter of course over the border. Their faith makes inevitably for a certain measure of segregation. But in Canada the Irish do not move or vote as an exotic half-naturalised machine, an unassimilated body to be bought and sold, cajoled or defied by the native

politician. No element in the United States wave the Stars and Stripes so vigorously as the Irish-Americans. No others, in proportion to number, have contributed so little of either spade-work or leadership to the making of that nation. None have worked so much evil in its body politic, or brought corruption to so fine an art. None as wilderness-winners have been more utterly backward, proving Sir Horace Plunkett's contention that the Catholic Irish are not naturally tillage farmers. None, by clinging to the cities, have done so great a share in creating slums, which rival those of the old world.

As the very antithesis of all this, at the other end of the pole, as regards their position in American life and history, stands the Ulster Protestant. He moved in there, however, a century or more before his Catholic neighbour. Luckily for the Americans, he was there to help them win their independence, and make a nation. He had been driven from Ireland by a persecution, spiritual and material, less excusable as coming from men of his faith and blood than that which, combined with mere blundering and the visitations of God, dispatched the many times greater Catholic influx of the nineteenth century. To Canada came both types of Irishmen, between Waterloo and the Crimea, but the Ulster Protestant in such far greater strength that the Orange element, spreading beyond its usual limits, impressed itself indelibly upon Ontario. It had a good effect, as already related, upon the others. It kept them quiet, turned their thoughts into more useful channels, and made in the end for peace, good feeling, and good citizenship.

It has been incidentally mentioned that by far the largest element in the comparatively small contribution Great Britain made to Canada in the first half-century of our occupation, prior, that is to say, to the war of 1812, were Scottish Highlanders. Many more went to the maritime

provinces, but considerable numbers, among whom were about a thousand of the Catholic Macdonells, were settled in the Glengarry country, Eastern Ontario, where they multiplied, expanded, and developed into prosperous farmers, though retaining the Gaelic tongue till a generation ago. Now the English-speaking Roman Catholics of Canada, mainly Irish, but including, of course, these old Highland Catholics, have their own church organisation under their own bishops. But the respective attitudes of the Scot and the Irishman towards their spiritual superiors in matters secular are characteristically different.

A drummer accustomed to travel on business in these Highland townships, once told me of an occurrence in a village well known to him that I altogether discredited, till a few years later I ran across a man from those parts who declared it to be perfectly true. It so happened that a new Roman Catholic bishop, an Irishman either from the States or the Old Country, had just been inducted to the Canadian See which includes the Glengarry country—Montreal, I think,—a bishop obviously who knew not Scotsmen, and unfortunately for himself a bishop of political proclivities. An important election in Canada was just then impending, and the misguided prelate, thinking, perhaps, he was in New York, or Tipperary, sent word to the priest of this Scottish flock, among others, to express from the pulpit the direction in which the Church, otherwise his Right Reverence, expected them to cast their votes. The priest respectfully replied that his people were not used to this kind of thing, and would resent it, that it would be much worse than useless if he attempted anything of the sort, as it would only be injurious to his own powers for good, and would unquestionably prejudice his people against the bishop's candidate. The Irish prelate, however, was merely incensed at this expression of sanity on the part of his

inferior, and wrote peremptorily commanding him to do as he was told. Once more the priest replied with every expression of the profoundest respect for his bishop, and for his lightest word in all matters pertaining to the Church; but as for using his pulpit or office for political purposes, above all, in such peremptory fashion as indicated to a Scottish-Canadian congregation, he must absolutely decline to be a party to anything of the kind. Moreover, he felt sure that if only the bishop were acquainted with the feelings of these people, he would cease to urge any such disastrous measure.

The bishop was extremely wroth with this recalcitrant country priest, so much so that at the very first opportunity he took train for the land of the Glengarries, thoroughly prepared to bring discipline to bear on priest and parish. The priest, however, was as respectful and indomitable in person as he had been in correspondence. So the bishop, with increasing choler, turned to try his chastening hand on the chief Mac of the community, who kept the principal store of the village. The hard-headed stalwart store-keeper listened respectfully to the Episcopal fulminations, and as a loyal Catholic expressed himself as his lordship's most humble and obedient servant in everything associated with matters pertaining to his soul. But the Glengarries were also loyal Britons, notoriously so, for a regiment of them had fought with renown through the war of 1812-15. The bishop was a fanatic or a would-be despot; at any rate, he was a most misguided person; for it was not only his candidate, as such, that he continued, with some truculency, to try and force on the advocacy of the leader of the parish, but his candidate was of the political colour peculiarly distasteful just then to Canadians of strong British proclivities.

The bishop, in short, did not know when to stop, or in his heat had overlooked the expression gathering on the brawny

Highlander's face. What produced the psychological moment, history does not say, but the few customers in the store were treated to a spectacle probably without precedent in modern Church history. For the bishop burst from its back precincts upon them with surprising celerity, going at a quick march towards the door, under the firm pressure of an iron hand upon the back of his sacred collar, and on coming to the platform outside, which, as in so many country stores in America, was lifted several feet above the street, the bishop did not turn down the steps to the right or left, like the customers, but by the same motive power was impelled straight over the edge, and alighted on his hands and knees in the street. It was even whispered that a sacrilegious boot hastened the descent. But, at any rate, he went back to Montreal a sadder and wiser man, and prudently kept his own counsel. But the few Glengarry villagers who witnessed the sight of their lives, had no interest in such reticence, though it was suppressed, I believe, as much as possible in the interests of the Church.

In a part of Ontario that I knew a little in these early days, and afterwards a good deal better, were several townships of Roman Catholic Irish farmers, who had been imported *en bloc* some thirty odd years previously, by an enterprising Canadian of light and leading. It had been a great success. The backwoods into which they had been introduced were, by this time, a nice farming country, thickly sprinkled with substantial homesteads. There had been, for these immigrants, no interlude of cities, or half-assimilated, entirely urbanised compatriots to absorb them on landing, and stagger their imaginations with the value of a vote, paid annually half in whisky and half in cash. Having no alternative, and with excellent British example all round them, they had proceeded at once to lead the lives of useful, self-respecting backwoods farmers.

Nor is it in the least against them that they and the Orangemen, who occupied adjoining territories, used to keep their hands in, as it were, upon every annual recurrence of each other's festal days; for in the local town, which served both the Green and the Orange regions, the processions with which each faction celebrated St. Patrick, or the 'pious and immortal memory,' respectively, were seldom conveyed through the streets without much diversion and skull-cracking. But the smashing of brass bands and the tearing up of flags, and the cracking of heads, in places like Peterborough and Lindsay, were rather the ebullition of animal spirits, stimulated by whisky and tradition, than malevolence. In the long intervals there was peace, and no great ill-feeling. And what I knew was but the tail end of a generation or more of quite lively faction fights. As late as the eighties, I remember, while stopping for a dinner of salt pork and potatoes at a farmhouse in the township of Ennismore, the old war-horse awoke in our host, as he snapped his fingers and cracked his heels at some compliments my friend passed on his prowess in former days as 'an Ennismore boy.'

One type of Canadian, however, was abroad in those days, and indeed for long after, and that was the Annexationist. One came across a good many men who talked this way. The United States, with their high protective duties, bore heavily on a poor country, whose industries were in their infancy, and markets limited. Perhaps in the eighties this feeling was still more in evidence; for then the agricultural competition of the American Virgin West had lowered prices, and hit the freehold farmers of Ontario precisely as it had hit the farmers of the eastern states and Europe. Canada was then going very slowly, and remained a comparatively poor country, while its big neighbour grew rapidly in wealth and prosperity. Good Ontario farms were

much lower in price, and not nearly so saleable in the eighties and early nineties as in the days when I first knew the country. The rise of the manufacturing industry, the opening of the Canadian west, a high tariff policy, and a readjustment of agricultural methods, have restored land to its old value, which is virtually its limit value. While, as for the enormous industrial strides Ontario has since made, it is no place to enlarge on them here. To-day an Annexationist could scarcely be found in the length and breadth of the land.

CHAPTER IX

VIRGINIA

Soon after the close of the American Civil War, in the sixties, when the South, deprived of its slaves, as such, settled down to face the novel conditions of free labour, Virginia was very much talked of in England as offering, in a measure, the prospects of a new country without the accompanying conditions of hardship and isolation. In fact, it was the country of the moment for the educated Englishman, more particularly the married man. It possessed, moreover, a flavour of romance, due partly, I am quite sure, to the Christy Minstrel ballads, and to British upper-class sympathy for the South during the war—a sympathy, it is to be feared, not prompted by altogether worthy motives. The spectacle of a nation, traditionally disliked, that had successfully revolted against ourselves, being itself in the throes of rebellion, was too much for human nature. Englishmen knew absolutely nothing of plantation life or society in the South. It was not comparatively familiar from constant intercourse, as had been the more luxurious life of the West Indies. But it had been vaguely idealised for a brief period, though the English literature of a generation or two before had almost always alluded to the Southerners as 'nigger drivers.' The few who thought historically swallowed wholesale what has been justly called by expert American ethnologists 'the gigantic myth' of the 'Cavalier and Aristocrat,' who capers in the background of the unhistori-

cal, sanguine, Virginia imagination. A figment of fancy reared by quite ingenuous vanity upon a slight basis of fact. English people in the sixties, moreover, had quite forgotten, if they had ever known, that the political party which, since the establishment of the United States, had been the most continuously hostile and truculent towards England was that of the South; that New England and her neighbours had for the most part disclaimed this policy of rabid abuse, of tail-twisting and pin-pricks maintained by the Democratic party, which included three-fourths of the Southern planters. Englishmen seemed to have forgotten, too, that the Southerners forced on the war of 1812 largely with the hope of taking Canada, and it was only the refusal of New England to take part in what they denounced as an iniquitous attack that enabled us to hold that country.

Sore, however, with defeat, and bitter against the Yankees, nothing came readier to the tongue of the Virginians when I first knew them than admiration for the British constitution, and regrets that their forebears had broken with the Mother Country. Even the Virginia bishop of a neighbouring state was heard violently abusing the 'Father of his country' on one occasion, to the dismay of his hearers. 'Yes,' said he; 'if it hadn't been for Washington we should now be the subjects of a gracious Queen instead of the son of a drunken Tennessee tailor.' This was all very well, but you couldn't have it both ways. I did not know any American history in those days, and was quite content to receive the impression from these genial Southerners that they had all along considered the revolt from England a mistake, and been consistent admirers of England and the British constitution ever since. I am not at all sure that they often realised themselves how very different had been the attitude of their fathers and grandfathers towards us, and that the latter had driven those who 'thought

imperially' into ruin and exile. They had been busy enough making history in their own persons, Heaven knows, but a knowledge of the remoter past was not their strong point. This did not matter in the least, and it was flattering to one's nationality to find it such an asset in one's favour, though hatred of the North had, I think, no little to do with it. But this is anticipating. For it has yet to be told that the attractions of Virginia lay in the number of estates of all sizes that were in the market, owing to the financial havoc wrought by the recent war, and the abandonment of farming by many of the better-class families, who either flinched from the prospect of agriculture without slavery, or were in debt, or were destitute of the capital wherewith to start again, and so sought other careers within or without the State. It was also pretty well known that the lands of Virginia had always been badly cultivated, and often exhausted, owing to the slavery system. Here, then, was a ready-made country, occupied indeed for two or three centuries with commodious homesteads and smooth-lying open lands selling for what then seemed, compared to the English figures of that day, a mere song. The Virginians had a good reputation, and on the whole deserved it, and were essentially, too, a rural people. The educated classes didn't live in towns as in Canada and the Northern States, leaving the country to be mainly occupied by energetic, thrifty boors. Towns had no place in their economy to speak of, except as centres for what we should call 'county business,' and on a greater or lesser scale for tobacco manufacturing and retail trade, largely run by Jews, Irish, or Germans. This all changed considerably afterwards, but when I first knew the country the old tradition of rural life, for all classes, though greatly crippled in its methods, still remained. A majority of the better families, and all the plainer farmers, stuck to their

homes, and made the best of them. The latter, the smaller slave-owners, won through, and are mainly there still; the others, in course of time, speaking generally, gave up the struggle, or their sons did, and moved into cities, or went west, and gave way to the rougher folk, or to outsiders with more capital. Some few remained, and gradually sank into a rougher social type. But this is a big question, and Virginia is nearly as large as England. That larger half of it between the Atlantic and the Blue Ridge Mountains, which, like a great wall, bisects it from north to south, that portion, in short, which mainly represented slavery and the old social traditions, was half as big as England, and varied greatly in physical and other conditions. It varied also in its capacity to face the change which followed abolition. People usually write and talk of the Southern social system, as if the slave-owners were all of one class, all 'gentlemen,' to put it broadly, and all well-off. We are concerned here with Virginia—the most typical and much the best socially of the Southern States. Not one slave-owner in twenty belonged to this type, or what was termed 'good family,' a designation merely signifying what we should call 'gentlefolk,' giving a most liberal interpretation to the phrase. Again, not one in a dozen, even of these, would, in their palmiest days, have been regarded as reasonably well-off by a small English country squire of the same period. But then the Virginian had enough for his requirements, which were simplicity itself, and didn't approach those of a small English country squire of two or three thousand a year. American writers of fiction and Virginia rhapsodists, who never saw any other country life, have published an incredible amount of more than childish nonsense upon this subject. These pleasant, provincial, simple-living folk figure as 'barons' and 'nabobs,' living in luxury and inhabiting 'princely mansions.' As the plain brick houses still stand

upon the James River and elsewhere for any one to see, as a living refutation of these monstrous fables, comment is needless, and it would only bore the English reader. But his conventional notions of Virginia, when he has any, have undoubtedly been affected by all this rubbish, and it is only interesting as an almost unique example of a sort of literary dementia, and a distorted sense of proportion that refuses to look ordinary facts—in bricks and mortar, acres, and dollars—in the face.

In some counties containing several thousand negro slaves there was scarcely a single family of gentlefolks, nothing but farmers, socially equivalent, though quite different sort of people, to the Ontario hundred-acre man or to the small and middling English farmer. In some again there were a dozen, in others twenty or thirty 'good families,' and these as a rule, of course, though not always, had larger places and more negroes than what may be called the yeomen, who again varied a little in status among themselves, though mixing freely together. There were, further, a good many common white people with no slaves, but connected by blood with those who had ; and below them again, with a more marked cleavage, came the degraded class of 'mean whites.' Such was Virginia, and, with modification, Southern society generally, in the old days, and though greatly crippled by the war, it still continued for many years more or less on these lines, and made this section of the United States the only part of North America where refinement and education had a recognised place in genuine country life. The 'good families,' of course, varied in prestige and importance, but they were all in the same swim, which was really regulated by common sense, or, in other words, by a similar standard of life, refinement and education. There were no rigid lines, no snubbing, no card-leaving. Everybody led the simple life—very simple—as

it would have been considered by the well-to-do class in England. They were all interested mainly in agriculture and the land, and had no connection with any other society, either at the north or abroad. The exceptions to this were just enough perhaps to prove the rule. There had been no money for foreign travel or adventure, and slavery tied people to their homes, even had the means or inclination to ramble been present. Politics had been, and remained, a theme of ceaseless interest to Virginians. But American politics in those days, at any rate, were mainly domestic; they had little world significance, and were no corrective to provincialism. Washington society didn't amount to much, judging from the many outside pictures of it, before the Civil War, but such as it was, a few Virginia families took the edge off their provincialism by periodically mingling with it.

This is not the place for ancient history, but the great 'Cavalier myth,' which British standard histories, in characteristically brief uncritical fashion, have helped to encourage, and the aristocratic ancestor which Virginians, in sheer naïveté and harmless vanity, have established in a shadowy way to their own satisfaction, must be alluded to, for emotional and impressionist writers of all kinds have found much copy in it. Thackeray himself, in his great book, *The Virginians*, fell partly into the trap. But then he didn't know, or profess to know, anything about transatlantic social history, and here was just enough basis in fact for his immortal romance. Yet even his account of Braddock's defeat is quite inaccurate, which matters more, but then he obviously and naturally took his facts from printed history, which, as regards that episode, has long since been rewritten. As regards 'the Great Myth,' the supposed aristocratic origin of the Virginians, as contrasted with the supposed plebeian extraction of the New Englanders, there was

not, in truth, a pin to choose between the social origin of those who founded, and afterwards counted, in either colony.

They were, in the main, middling English folk, with, in both cases, a sprinkling of the sons of full-quivered country squires, themselves as plentiful as blackberries in the seventeenth century. There were no 'Services' to speak of, civil or military, in those days. The sons of Court people and their hangers-on got what patronage was going. The younger sons of country squires, as we know, or very often don't know, went into trade, retail or wholesale, or became farmers, parsons, attorneys, surgeons, millers, brewers, and also emigrated largely, taking their chance in the colonies with other men of middling condition. Many went to Virginia or to the West Indies and other colonies. But the aristocracy—'landocracy' would be a better term—that arose there in the middle of the seventeenth century was of quite miscellaneous social origin, and did not rate itself by British antecedents so much as by the substance it acquired in the new country. Virginia having an easy climate, and its first settled sea-board portions being threaded by navigable rivers, the tendency to scatter and acquire large holdings jumped with the new and profitable industry of tobacco-growing. This led to the importation of convicts and indentured servants of respectable character, a form of labour followed in time by negro slaves. Virginia was settled by people mainly untouched by Republican notions, and in sympathy with the Anglican Church, which was established by law. English custom prevailed in everything; sectaries were banished, counties had their lieutenant, sheriff, magistrates, and militia. An Upper House nominated by the Royal Governor, and a Lower House elected by the freeholders, represented the administration. An absence of all popular education helped to

consolidate power and influence in the class who could afford the luxury. So far it was aristocratic.

At the close of the Civil War in England a large influx of Royalists of all degrees came into Virginia, men reduced in circumstances, or deprived of their employment. They amounted in all to perhaps a tenth of the population already there. Most of the more important returned at the Restoration, but the bulk remained, some of whom had enough means to start on a fair scale in the new country. This constitutes the cavalier tradition, while it has been strengthened in America by the fanciful and romantic use and interpretation of that alluring designation for all immigrants who had fought on the losing side in the English Civil War. Seen through the mists of time and across the Atlantic, they have become plumed and prancing knights of illustrious lineage. Our 'cavalier ancestors,' conveniently ignoring the large population prior to them, was a phrase of almost daily use in the Virginia local press, and no wonder it became a catch-word in ordinary society as a kind of side-slap at the Yankees, who were supposed to have come from an altogether lower origin. This sort of feather-headed talk flavoured most conversation that turned on the past, and it was accompanied by an almost complete absence of any real serviceable knowledge concerning colonial Virginia and its people which was most provoking to any one who, like myself, was curious in these matters, and fond of them. This fantastic phraseology fairly obsessed the press, and I suppose the people liked it. In the report of dances or weddings, even among quite common people, the men were constantly alluded to as 'Cavaliers' or 'Sir Knights,' the women as 'Fair Dames' or 'Demoiselles.' The late Moncure Conway, himself a Virginian of one of the real old families, once remarked to me, at his own table in this country, that he believed all this nonsense, which he

naturally ridiculed, was modern. He couldn't remember any trace of it in the forties, of which period, from a social point of view, he gives, by the way, a very pretty picture in his autobiography.

But at the War of American Independence there was a great upsetting. A considerable minority of the prominent families were expelled as Loyalists. The laws of primogeniture and entail, though not, in fact, extensively practised, were abolished. A strong democratic wave swept upward. Ordinary farmers no longer took their hats off to 'gentlemen,' but expected to be treated nominally as equals, to be shaken by the hand, and, if business brought them to the house, to sit down at table, or be put up for the night. This henceforward became the custom, and an extremely disagreeable custom it was. Uncomfortable, in short, for both parties, but rigidly observed. The influential colonial families, by expulsion or subdivision, though land was always plentiful and cheap in Virginia, became relatively less important, while scores of others emerged from plain farmers into the gentry class, and soon became 'good family,' or to the negroes 'quality.' Democracy and Republicanism didn't stop aristocratic ideas, though it lowered the standard, and compelled discretion in dealing with white inferiors, and in labelling them as such. The word 'gentleman,' as nearly everywhere else in the United States, ceased to have any meaning (out of doors), and was claimed by every white man. But this didn't make any difference. The higher class, though partly reconstructed and infinitely recruited, still remained socially apart.

The Virginians had not much business aptitude, but this was not because they were the descendants of cavalier noblemen, for they were nothing of the kind, but because they were farmers handicapped by the uneconomical and

deplorably slipshod methods of servile negro labour. They liked to talk of the Northerners, whom they disliked on principle before the war, as 'traders,' with an affectation of contempt. One might almost have fancied an English country gentleman of that period speaking of a Manchester man. But such an analogy would be utterly false. The former visiting the Manchester man's villa would have been among material surroundings either perfectly familiar, or on a less sumptuous scale than his own. The simple Virginia country gentleman visiting the Philadelphia or Boston banker would have found himself among surroundings utterly new to him, for their sumptuousness, order, and comparative luxury, and probably listening to general conversation of a range that he had never heard before. If he had visited an English country house, which he never did, he would have encountered an entirely strange world, hitherto, one may fairly say, unimaginable to him. When the local newspapers wrote of his plain rectangular brick house of ten rooms as a 'baronial mansion,' which it constantly did, and still does in the retrospect, and his 1500 acres of mostly very poor land, worth before the war £6000, as a 'princely estate,' he would, after such an experience, have begun to see more plainly the humours of Southern phraseology.

Indeed, what helped to make the Virginians such interesting people was the fact that not one in a hundred of the better class had ever seen any other life but their own, or that of neighbouring slave States, which was virtually identical. Those who had been north had only, for the most part, gone in parties to summer hotels, and knew nothing of its social life. Very few indeed had been to Europe, and then only perhaps once on a hurried tour. The planters of the far south, South Carolina for instance, who, for good reasons, were much richer and more cosmopolitan, and approximated more to the old West

Indian type, had been, I think, the chief Southern travellers. Above all, as in most of the old States, there had been no immigration from Europe to speak of for nearly two centuries, the Virginians had developed their own type almost in complete severance from the Mother Country. A few of the leading colonial families before the War of Independence had sent their sons to Eton or Westminster. But all that had long passed away. They had then their own small colleges, of names unknown to European ears, but which every good Virginian in my day honestly believed to be equal in merit and fame to Harvard and Yale, if not to Oxford and Cambridge. All these things only intensified the provincialism which was in no way modified by the fact that the well-to-do families nearly always spent their annual holiday at a watering-place in the Virginia mountains, where they met all their friends and relatives from other counties—for they mostly knew one another—and were probably the most sociable people on the face of the earth, as they were certainly the most hospitable. Their particular kind of provincialism didn't make them dull. They were great talkers. The cynic afflicted with priggishness or preciosity might wonder what they found to talk about. In the first place, they were as a class extremely bright and intelligent. They were also racy of speech, good raconteurs, with a strong sense of humour, and a dry, slow delivery that gave great force to it. The very best people spoke excellent English, interspersed with many of the archaic English adjectives, such as 'mighty,' 'powerful,' 'elegant.' Below that the language went down through gradations to the speech of Uncle Remus, tolerably familiar to English readers.

As regards subjects that kept the Virginian's tongue wagging so steadily upon his shady porch, or before his log fire, there was plenty of scope. In my time the great war

was not long over. Every man I knew between five-and-twenty and sixty had fought in it or through it. One passed earthworks still as fresh as the day they were made in one's rides abroad, and railway journeys were punctuated with forlorn little stations whose names had been but recently familiar in every English country vicarage, and were to become historic. That was the worst of it! The war was too recent and too familiar an everyday topic of conversation among the actual participators in it. It became almost a bore, I am ashamed to say. I heard hundreds of war stories, and heard every battle in Virginia fought over again by men who were in it as officers or privates, nearly all of which, alas, time has melted down into little more than a general impression. Such unhappily are the things which are near and recent, if one has not actually shared in them. Indeed, my own house had been for two days the head-quarters of a Northern general. As to-day I read books on the war with all the interest of some remote historical drama, I would give a good deal to be again by the hearth of some of my old friends and neighbours, mostly now dead, no doubt. But that is the way of it, particularly at five-and-twenty or thirty, with all the urgent interests of the present and of an active outdoor life.

Genealogy is popularly supposed in America to be the particular passion of Virginians. There was a half-truth in this, as in so many of the Virginia legends. The ladies knew all their second cousins twice-removed throughout the State, and who their respective fathers and mothers, possibly even grandfathers and grandmothers, had married. But when they got further back they became, for the most part, vague, decorative, and fanciful. The men as a rule cared not very much for such things. They were generally convinced, however, that there were no people, in America at any rate, equal to the Virginians, and no social life equal

to their own, and I am inclined to think that they succeeded in conveying that impression to the world so far as the world takes any interest in the matter.

Virginia, as she was the oldest, may fairly be said to have been the best type, though not latterly the richest, of the Southern States, which all led more or less the same existence, and held the same ideas. I am not sure that an ancient miller who ground my wheat, and, as a young militiaman, had followed Tippecanhoe Harrison in his raid through Upper Canada in the war of 1812, didn't touch my fancy more than my many present friends who had fought under Lee and Jackson, which may be put down to the perversity of the imagination. The one was already history, the other common everyday talk. I had neighbours, too, who owned Jefferson's second property, where he frequently resided and carried out those agricultural experiments of which he was so fond in later life. Some other friends again had a whole budget of interesting letters from the famous statesman written to their grandfather, which have never been published. I used also to shoot occasionally over a property in Middle Virginia formerly owned by Patrick Henry, and personally knew a very ancient negro who, as a child, had belonged to, and remembered him. It seemed strange to be spreading out our game at evening on the rough lawn of a weather-stained wooden house in this heart of a half-forgotten country, where, a century before, the statesman who had done as much as any orator of his time to break up the British Empire spent his odd days and weeks in the interests of a modest corn and tobacco crop. These and similar associations, coupled with the quiet, though busy life, the rather easy-going atmosphere, the general charm of the scenery, and a certain indescribable picturesqueness, and even suggestion of romance, which rested on the land, seemed to turn the fancy backward rather than forward. It had the effect of drawing mine, at any rate, towards the earlier days of

British colonisation and American history, and such local records, oral and documentary, as happened to come in my way. Mere food for dreams, to be sure, in an active outdoor life, which included, however, long days in the saddle through many counties. But they proved a greater comfort still in after years, when such fancies took more practical shape and wider scope. There were assuredly compensations for living in a country incapable at that time of keeping step with the rest of the United States in its forward march, and that was regarded materially by the men of the west as beneath contempt. The Virginians, it may, on the other hand, be noted, then regarded the men of Nebraska or Minnesota, though they knew very little about them, simply as mannerless Yahoos.

It was no wonder, I think, that Virginians were greatly attached to the land they had occupied for so long, and in an agricultural sense had treated so deplorably. To this last delinquency they generally, to be sure, pleaded guilty, though very few were familiar with any reasonably farmed country.

The descendants of the Ulstermen who, during the eighteenth century, had poured into their hinterland, then forest wilderness, and now mainly occupied the western portions of the State as comparatively thrifty farmers of relatively small farms were, to be sure, a standing testimony to the others' wasteful methods. For the Virginians had only to cross the Blue Ridge, which lofty rampart lay along the back of Old Virginia proper, to see a beautiful part of their own State cultivated something as the Northern States were cultivated by another breed of people from themselves, who, moreover, had indulged comparatively little in slave labour. The English-descended Virginians, the typical ones, that is to say, descended from the old immigrations, had been saddled with their negroes by their forefathers. They couldn't help themselves, and were rather the victims of a system which, though conducive to a pleasant unenterprising life, was, in

fact, an economic incubus. In the semi-tropical States to the southward, negro labour had been virtually a necessity, as well as really profitable. But had Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina been settled up in smaller farms, negroes would have been scarcely more necessary than in New Jersey or New York, where slavery had been shaken off early as uneconomical. In Virginia it had taken too firm a hold, waxed and grown, till long before the late Civil War it had woefully impoverished the State. But then, if it had not been for slavery, which Virginia carried on more mercifully, more picturesquely, and more unprofitably than any other province, Virginia life and society would be of no interest at all to outsiders. Their educated class would have gathered into towns as in Pennsylvania or Ontario. Their rural districts, as there, would have been tilled by working farmers, and the country would have been prosperous, instead of rather pathetically out-at-elbows, after two hundred years; and worse than all, with most of its capital in negroes, the increase of which scarcely any one liked to sell, but many were nevertheless forced to, since they were the chief security for debt.

For thirty years before the Civil War of 1861-5, it is generally held that the export of negroes to the cotton states, which only then began to create a serious demand for them, alone kept old Virginia on her legs. And then came the crash of the war, in which her sons, who had little hand in bringing it about, and were more than half averse to, played so brave and distinguished a part.

But to come back to more practical issues. There was a great vogue in England, as already stated, for purchasing Virginia property, which, at the depressed prices due to the ruin of the war, appeared extremely cheap. The project of restoring the exhausted land that formed the greater part of most of these places, which otherwise looked so attractive, seemed a feasible one. The Virginians themselves were

honestly sanguine as to such possibilities. Furthermore, these old homesteads were ready for occupation: roomy brick or frame houses, outhouses, cabins, orchards, gardens, farm buildings—everything to hand, if sometimes greatly out of repair. The general effect was often quite picturesque and mellow. There was little here of the crudity and hardship of a new country, and it was universally believed that these estates, generally of from 300 to 1000 acres, at from £3 to £6 an acre, would go up greatly in value as the South righted itself. Land was then high all over the civilised world. Hundred-acre Ontario farms ranged from £8 to £20 an acre. In the good districts of Pennsylvania places of the same size then fetched from £30 to £40 an acre. It will be remembered that in the better parts of England large estates, purely agricultural, sometimes changed hands at double the latter figure. Produce was everywhere fetching good prices. It seemed incredible that property in an old accessible country like Virginia, merely because the land itself was in bad condition, could remain at a figure which sometimes represented less than the original cost of the buildings. But it did nevertheless, and what is more, for a long time went steadily down. Moreover, there was plenty of cheap labour. The negroes were practically still all on the land, with the habit of work and the absolute necessity to pursue it for a living yet upon them. They were in those days, too, quite good and cheerful workmen, and received rather less wages than a Wiltshire labourer, while working longer hours. No wonder the prospect looked hopeful as well as pleasant. Even the better-class Virginia families who had remained on their places to face the new situation and adopt improved methods, though generally very short of capital and equipment, were sanguine in the early seventies. To married Englishmen of the better class the attractions seemed very great. The difficulty of the lady struggling with rough conditions amid a

society of boors, with practically no help, as in the West or rural Canada, seemed solved, for there was no lack of negro women servants, such as they were, in those days.

But from a material point of view most of these hopes were disappointed. All old countries were plunged into depression, as every one knows, soon after this by Western competition, and the old American States felt it even before Great Britain. The land of Virginia, largely of a beautiful red colour, like that of Devonshire, proved in great part poorer than any Englishman or Scotsman could have imagined land to be. Some of it was naturally sterile, though upsetting all recognised rules by carrying, where these had been left, fine forests of hard-wood timber. Some of the open land had once been good, but was now worn out, covered with poor growth and rent by rain-washed gullies ; much again looked smooth and nice, but was in reality quite exhausted. A certain amount was still fairly fertile, while the alluvial flats by the streams and rivers were nearly always rich. But the bad largely predominated, and physical and climatic reasons, which matter nothing here, made it more tedious and expensive to restore than land in colder countries. So in the face of sustained depression, Virginia property went down rather than up, while more and more of it was forced on to the market, and with falling prices restoring poor land did not pay, nor did the particular attractions, which the country offered to English gentlemen, appeal to the migrating classes of other types, such as boom up new countries, and the movement was in consequence numerically small. Then again the roads were infamous beyond belief, for the old Virginian had in two centuries never grasped even the elements of road-making. A few Northerners, too, came in, but it was socially not altogether pleasant for them on account of the war feeling, while they themselves differed much in habit, tradition, and temperament from the Virginians.

Since those days the South has made tremendous strides, but in sections rather than collectively, and so far as outside capital and energy goes, it has progressed more by mining and manufacturing than by agricultural enterprise, while there has been little immigration. Virginia has gone ahead perhaps least of all the old slave States, and has prospered only in patches for good and divers reasons. But many of the most typical and representative old counties have gone back into semi-wildness, and the deer returned to haunts from which a prosperous civilisation banished them a century and a half ago. Many counties, on the other hand, remained fairly prosperous through everything, but neither their prices nor other conditions not relevant here much attracted the movement which took me there. It was a numerically small movement, of course, but being virtually confined to Englishmen, Scotsmen, and Irishmen of the better class, and a good deal to married men, in many cases retired officers and civilians, it attracted a good deal of notice in the Old Country. There were very few districts then in England where Virginia was not at least a familiar word, as Florida and California became at a later day. It is quite true that with the exception of those people who had closely followed the American Civil War, the average Briton knew nothing about the country. To some it awoke a faint echo from some far-off picturesque clime, where happy negroes eulogised their 'ole massa' to the accompaniment of the banjo, or adjured one another to 'listen to the mocking bird.' Others conceived it to be a new country like the West, like Iowa, Minnesota, or Dakota, where you built a log-house, and shot bears out of the window. A few who had acquaintances there thought it belonged to England! More than one of our friends used to congratulate us on being within such easy visiting distance of our relations in Canada. We did sometimes visit them, the journey then occupying two days by rail, and the com-

plete contrast in every particular was extremely interesting. However, to any whose opportunities throughout life have been unavoidably considerable for appreciating the knowledge of oversea conditions at the heart of our great empire, these lapses were nothing, and would still be nothing, as may any day be proven beyond a doubt.

If Virginia did not fulfil the expectations of a new country, it had many compensations which appealed more or less according to individual temperament. People generally, I think, led happy lives there, not yet greatly harassed by the shifting of the negroes townwards, which in the eighties began to create the labour difficulty, indoors and out, that now, more than ever, is the curse of American rural life. We, at any rate, enjoyed our ten years, and would have been perfectly content at the time had the fates so ordained to have remained there permanently. Virginia is now, however, an utterly different country. Black labour, for which there was no substitute, has practically disappeared from the country districts, and flocked into big cities, to mines, and to public works. With the dying out of the old planter class, born and reared under the old conditions, everything that made Virginia humanly and socially interesting to a stranger vanished. Their successors are quite different. The very young people, even in my day, were generally a great falling off from their parents. The chaos of war and succeeding poverty had indeed suspended all advantages for that particular generation which, to be candid, was often conceited as well as ignorant, with rarely any of the charm of their elders. But they have long forsaken country life, and with their children been distributed through many successful channels, north, south, and west, of American industrial life. They are merely a new type of modern American, with the physical and superficial attributes of the South upon them, and concern neither the reader nor

myself. For the old Southern life is long dead. A present generation of writers who didn't know it, may make pretence, either through ignorance or for literary purposes, that some of it is still there. But it isn't, at least not any part of it worth recording. Country life of a much more decorative and modern sort is maintained for part of the year in a few pet regions of Virginia by Northerners, Southerners, or Englishmen who have made, or are making, money in cities. The country indeed lends itself to such a life, where the land is tolerable, or of no serious consequence to its owner, and the road trouble rectified, which is easy enough where wealth concentrates. But the bulk of the State is in the hands of common farmers, hard-working sons and grandsons of the easy-going slave-holding yeomen, who were themselves often racy and original people full of character. These things need not be further elaborated. They do not matter to a book which is purely retrospective. As regards the life that I myself saw and shared in, I have thought it better to illustrate it here by a few sketches of types and scenes that I knew. For they were written at a time when both were fresh in the mind, and are selected from many that appeared in English magazines, principally *Macmillan* and *Blackwood*, to which I contributed from quite an early day. With slight rearrangement, and a few interpolations and additions, they are printed here as they originally appeared. They caused much amusement in Virginia, and were frankly accepted as faithful pictures of men and times already then passing away. I have heard since that at least two old gentlemen went to their graves under the firm, and I believe treasured, conviction that they were each the original of 'the doctor.' Mar'se Dab would assuredly have had no difficulty in identifying himself. But in the first place he never read anything, and in the second had passed, as here related, into the vortex of the West.

CHAPTER X

THE DOCTOR AND THE COLONEL—TWO OLD VIRGINIA FOX-HUNTERS

Now the doctor was a Southerner of the old school. Nor was he merely a North Carolinian, a Tennesseean, a Kentuckian, or a Georgian—not any, thank you! No, our friend was a Virginian. And this he was by virtue of six or seven generations of forebears who had fought, physicked, speechified, fox-hunted, raised negroes and tobacco, in that immortal commonwealth. He would never speak nor think of himself as an American, except in the same sense that an Englishman might call himself a European. The doctor was, every moment of the day, and every day in the year, a Virginian above everything; and, as I have already implied, he felt thereby that a responsibility and a glory above that of other mortals—American mortals, at any rate—had been conferred upon him by the accident of his birth. I may add, moreover, that he was unquestionably non-progressive, and that to the end of his days he was so reactionary that the very sound of a railway irritated him; and finally, that he was, beyond a doubt, eminently picturesque.

The doctor was about sixty-five at the time of which I write. He had never set foot outside Virginia, and never wanted to. That a country, however, or a climate, or a people, existed that could be mentioned in the same breath with the old Cavalier colony (so-called), never for one moment was accounted within the bounds of possibility by that good and simple soul.

And yet, paradoxical as it may seem, the doctor was proud of his descent from pure English stock. 'None of your Scotch or Irish, or Scotch-Irish, for me. No, I thank you, sir. My folks,' he was fond of asserting, 'were real English stock, who came over 'way back in early colonial days, and settled on the York River. They were kin to the nobility.' Whatever may have been the accuracy of this last claim the doctor's patronymic in Virginia genealogy was above reproach. Nor would I have it supposed that my old friend was given to blustering about either his state or his descent. The doctor was merely a Virginian. His thoughts and his habits, which were peculiar and original, were simply those of Virginians of his class and generation somewhat strongly emphasised. He was just and unassuming, kindly and homely. There was about him a delightful and old-fashioned, if somewhat ponderous suavity of manner, that the rest of the Anglo-Saxon race have long, long outgrown. To hear a married female who was not black addressed as otherwise than 'Madam' almost pained him. As for the children, the doctor had a separate greeting for every one of them, let his host's quiver be ever so full. Ay, and generally something more than that; for the doctor's capacious pockets were known by the little ones to be almost as inexhaustible in the way of chinquapins, hickory-nuts, and candy, as his well-worn saddle-bags were of less inviting condiments.

The doctor's belief in his country (and by his country, of course, I mean Virginia) was the religion in which he was born. International comparisons he could not make, for he had never been out of the State. I feel perfectly sure, however, that if he had travelled over every corner of the earth, his faith was of that fundamental description which is proof against mere sights and sounds. He would have returned to the shade of his ancestral porch, temporarily

staggered, perhaps, but still unconvinced that any country could compare with old Virginia.

He had never been in a city, unless the little capital of Richmond may be accounted such, where every third man or woman he met was his cousin; where most of polite society called one another by their Christian names, dined in the middle of the day, and sat out on chairs in the street after supper, and, I am afraid, chewed tobacco. Richmond was a snug and pleasant place but for this blemish, no doubt; but its atmosphere would have tended to confirm, not to shake, the doctor's homely faith.

He had only a moderate property—two farms—of which we shall speak anon. But then he was a Patton; and as everybody south of the Potomac well knew, the Pattons were one of the first families in the state. There was a multitude of first families in Virginia, which puzzled, and sometimes imposed upon strangers, till they understood the country and this little characteristic, and could distinguish the sheep from the goats. The goats were perhaps the most numerous, and were too ingenuous for serious criticism. Moreover, Judge Patton, the doctor's father, had been one of the greatest jurists south of Washington—'in the world,' Virginians said; but as a compromise we will admit he was one of the first in America, and quite distinguished enough to shed some social halo over his immediate descendants, even supposing they had not been Pattons.

The original Patton mansion was burnt down in 1840. Nothing was left but the office in the yard, where in those days our friend the doctor pursued his medical investigations, and entertained his bachelor friends. The judge had been a busy man, and much absent. He was always 'laying out to build him a new house'; but death laid him out while the scheme was still in embryo. The doctor, who, as only son, became proprietor, had his hands too full,

what with negroes, and farming, and physicking, and fox-hunting, to carry it out till the war was upon him, and with its results put an end, as he thought at the time, to everything which makes life sweet.

It must not, however, be supposed that the doctor and his father had gone houseless or camped out since 1840. Not at all. From the old brick office, which had survived that memorable conflagration, there had grown—I use the word, advisedly—a rambling structure, whose design, rather than actual weight of years, gave it an appearance venerable enough to command the respect and admiration of summer tourists from New York and Philadelphia. It was not often such exotics passed that way, but when they did, they would almost always pull up at the doctor's front gate and gaze through it with that admiration and respect that Americans are inclined to pay to anything in their own country that recalls the past.

'Oh, isn't that too quaint for anything!' the ladies never failed to remark. 'That 's a real old ramshackle Virginia house, by thunder! and a pretty heavy old fossil inside it, you bet!' said the more observant of the gentlemen.

The doctor would have gloried in such criticism had he heard it. He hated Yankees; he hated your new-fangled houses; he hated railroads; he hated towns; he hated breech-loading guns; sights and sounds and things that he was not familiar with at five-and-twenty, he would have none of when he was between sixty and seventy.

The doctor's house was unconventional, to be sure, while weather and neglect of paint or whitewash had given it an air of antiquity, to which it had no real claim. It lay a hundred yards back from the road, and appeared to consist of four or five small houses of varying dimensions, and occupying relationships towards one another of a most

uncertain kind. Two of these leaned heavily together, like convivial old gentlemen seeing one another home. The rest lay at respectful distances from each other, connected only by open verandahs, through which the summer breeze blew freshly, and lovingly fanned the annuals that spread and twined themselves along the eaves. Almost every style of Virginia rural architecture found place in this homely collection of edifices which even 'old man Jake,' the negro, who had for twenty years looked after the doctor's horses and stolen his corn, used to describe as 'mighty shacklin', and lookin' like as if they 'd bin throwed down all in a muss.'

It was, however, a quite characteristic Virginia house of its kind. There were squared chestnut-logs, black with rain and sun, against which the Venetian shutters of the windows banged and thumped in gusty spring days as against walls of adamant. There were walls of pine weather-boarding, and roofs of wooden shingles, slanting and heaving in every direction—black, rotting, and moss-grown here, white and garish there, where penetrating rains had forced the slow and reluctant hand of repair. Dormer-windows squinted at you from above, their shattered panes patched with local newspapers of remote date, and telling of stuffy attics behind, where hornets, yellow-jackets, and 'mud-daubers' careered about in summer-time over apple-strewn floors. Then there was the old brick office before mentioned—relic of a remoter past. Its comparative antiquity, however, and presumably mellow tone had been ruthlessly effaced, for this was the only part of the doctor's mansion that he had selected for a coat of whitewash. It was used for professional purposes, and known by the doctor's patients as the 'sujjery.'

Nor should surroundings be forgotten: the stately oaks that towered high above the quaint low buildings, and covered with leaves and débris the greater portion of that

domestic enclosure which in those parts was known as the yard; the branching acacias that grew close to the house, and spread their tall arms above the roof, littering it in autumn with showers of small curly leaves, and choking the wooden gutters (for the doctor considered tin piping a modern heresy) with fragmentary twigs; the fresh green turf that had matted and spread for one hundred and fifty years around this house and the more imposing one that preceded it; the aged box-trees that had once, no doubt, in prim rows lined a well-tended gravel-path, but now cropped up here and there upon the turf, like beings that had outlived their time and generation; the clustering honeysuckles, bending their old and rickety frames to the ground; the silver aspens before the door, whose light leaves shivered above your head in the most breathless August days; the slender mimosa, through whose beautiful and fragile greenery the first humming-birds of early June shyly fluttered; and lastly, the long rows of straw hives against the rickety fence, where hereditary swarms of bees—let well alone—made more honey than the doctor and all his neighbours could consume.

The doctor's front gate too! Ah! how well I remember it! with the short avenue of stunted cedars leading across the turf to where the front porch of the old house once stood. I speak thus feelingly because it was such a real old Virginia gate, and in fruitless endeavours to open it I and my horse have so often had to jump—for our skins, if not our lives, as it suddenly collapsed and fell forward with a resounding crash on to the highroad. The doctor's gate had no doubt commenced life with two hinges and a latch. Most of the time I knew it, however, it was poised upon a single hinge, and that the lower one, and was kept upright by two ponderous twelve-foot fence rails leaned up against it. To look at that awful barrier you would have taken the doctor for the

most inhospitable instead of the most sociable of men. To achieve a passage through it with dignity and safety required assistance. Most of the doctor's friends—nobody walked, it may be noted, in Virginia—used to hang about outside and shout till some of the hands came and removed the obstacle. You couldn't have left your horse outside and proceeded across the lawn, for the 'guard dog' was a fearsome creature of Virginia rural life, and of the doctor's premises a whole pack of hounds, if they were at home, regarded themselves as the responsible custodians. All the years I knew the doctor he was going to fix that gate—and I believe he woke up every morning with the fullest intention of doing so. But he never did. One or two of his intimates used to pull down the snake fence beside it and ride through as a protest, declaring it was a much easier matter than opening the gate. But it was no use. Of course the doctor's attitude towards his gate was merely an exaggerated form of that held by many of his neighbours towards dilapidations in general; just as his reactionary tendencies were those of most of his contemporaries, only emphasised with undue vigour.

Of these last there was plenty of evidence in the more substantial mansions which crowned the hilltops in the doctor's neighbourhood. Square blocks of brick, some many-windowed and green-shuttered, with heavy porticoes supported by rows of white-fluted pillars stretching along their face. Others, great wooden barns, with expansive shingle roofs and rows of dormer-windows, and crazy crumbling porches, and stacks of red-brick chimneys clambering up outside the walls at the gable-ends, or anywhere else that came handy. There were plenty of these within range of the doctor's house and the limits of his practice, and to the proprietor of almost every one the doctor was related. The stages of this relationship varied

from the unquestioned affinity of cousins and nephews to that which is described in Virginia by the comprehensive and far-reaching appellative of 'kin.' To be kin of the Pattons, moreover, was in itself a desirable thing in Virginian eyes. Though the doctor lived in such an unpretentious residence, and worked day in and day out as a country practitioner, there were people in the neighbourhood who were always pleased to remember that their father's first cousin had married the old judge's brother.

With all the doctor's quaint ideas, his homespun exterior, and strong prejudices, he was a complete and perfect gentleman, though of the kind meant for use, and not for show. I can see him now, riding in at the gate on some wild January day, bringing hope in his kindly face, and good conservative time-honoured drugs in his well-worn saddle-bags. A woollen scarf is drawn round his head, and on the top of it is crammed an old slouch hat. A long black cloak, fastened round his throat with a clasp, and lined with red flannel, falls over the saddle behind. His legs, good soul, are thickly encased in coils of wheat-straw, wound tightly round them from his ankles upwards, a special patent of his own. In his hand, by way of a whip, he carries a bushy switch plucked from the nearest tree, and upon one heel the survivor of a pair of spurs that would have scarified a rhinoceros had they been sharp.

The doctor had been a widower since the first year of the war. After a fashion not uncommon, he had buried his wife in the orchard. A simple marble shaft in that homely quarter spoke of her virtues and her worth to the colts and calves that bit the sweet May grass around her tomb, and to the encroaching swine that crunched the rotting apples as they fell in autumn from the untended trees. The doctor had had two sons, but both had fallen in the war. Who he would ''ar [heir] his place to' was a common subject of

discussion among the negroes on the property. His profession, no doubt, was his first care ; but his heart was with his farms and his foxhounds. The doctor had practised over, or, as we used to say there, ' ridden ' the south side of the county for nearly forty years. He had studied medicine with the intention only of saving the doctor's bill in his father's household of negroes, but had soon dropped into a regular practice, and for the last five-and-twenty years, at any rate, no birth or death within a radius of ten miles would have been considered a well-conducted one without his good offices. The doctor's income, upon the well-thumbed scroll of hieroglyphics that he called his books, was nearly three thousand dollars a year. He collected probably about fifteen hundred. A considerable portion, too, of this last was received in kind, not conveniently convertible, such as bacon, Indian corn, hams, wheat-flour, woollen yarns, sucking-pigs, home-made brooms, eggs, butter, bricks, sweet-potato slips, sawn plank, tobacco-plants, shingles, chickens, baskets, sausage-meat, sole-leather, young fruit-trees, raw hides, hoe-handles, and old iron. To utilise these various commodities, it would have been necessary for the doctor to have had a farm, even supposing he had not already been the fortunate proprietor of two. Indeed, a farm to a Southern country doctor was not only necessary as a receptacle for the agricultural curiosities that were forced upon him in lieu of payment, but for the actual labour of those many dusky patients who could give no other return for physic and attendance received. You might see a bevy of these Ethiopian creditors almost any day upon the doctor's farm, wandering aimlessly about with hoes or brier-blades, chattering and cackling and putting in a happy and a pleasant day.

The doctor might have been called a successful physician. He had no rivals. There were two inferior performers in

the district, it is true, who were by way of following the healing art—small farmers, who were reported to have studied medicine in their youth. One of these, however, had not credit sufficient to purchase drugs, and the other was generally drunk. So it was only their near relations, when not dangerously indisposed, who patronised them—or some patient of the doctor's now and again, who took a fancy that the latter was too 'aristocratic,' till he got badly sick, and returned with alacrity to his allegiance. There is no doubt, I fear, but that the doctor practised on the lines of former days. Tory to the backbone in every other department of life, it was hardly to be expected that he should have panted for light and leading in that branch of learning in which he had no rival within reach.

I should like to follow him for a bit on his long professional rounds, and listen to his cheery talk in homestead and cabin, to help him fill his long pipe, which he draws out of his top-boot when the patient has settled down to sleep or quiet; to hear him once again chat about tobacco and wheat, politics and foxes. I should like, too, to say something of the doctor's farming—Heaven save the mark!—on his two properties; the one 'ard' him by his father, and the other one, the quarter-place near by, that 'cum to him with his wife, ole Cunnel Pendleton's daughter.'

The doctor farmed, as he did everything else, in the good old Virginia fashion—or in what is now irreverently known as the 'rip an' tar [tear] principle.' He didn't care anything about acres or estimates; and as for farm books, his professional accounts pestered him quite enough. Of rotations, he neither knew nor wanted to know anything. His chief aim was to plough and sow as much land as he could scuffle over with all the labour he could scrape together. Of manuring, clovering, or fertilising, he took little

account. If only he 'pitched' a big crop, he was a proud and happy man.

The doctor's first care was of necessity his patients; but there is no doubt, I think, that his real affections were divided between his farms and his foxhounds. That he did his duty by the former was amply testified to by the popularity he enjoyed. That he signally failed in the treatment of his lands was quite as evident; for while he healed the sores and the wounds of his patients, the sores, the wounds, the storm-rent gullies, the bare galls in his hillsides grew worse and worse. The maize-stalks grew thinner, the tobacco lighter, the wheat-yield poorer, year by year. The income derived from his profession just sufficed to make good the losses on the farm. So, though the doctor, in spite of his household expenses being trifling, could rarely lay his hand on a five-dollar bill, he managed to keep, upon the whole, pretty free from debt. With a scattered practice, and an agricultural hobby extending over a thousand acres, including woods and old fields 'turned out' to recover, it may be a matter of surprise that our old friend had leisure for a third indulgence, especially one like fox-hunting, which is connected in the British mind with such a large consumption of time and money. Nevertheless the doctor, like many or his compeers, was passionately fond of the chase, and, in spite of the war and altered times, had kept some hounds round him almost without a break since he was a boy. It will be seen, however, that fox-hunting, as understood and followed by our friend, was by no means incompatible with his more serious avocations.

Now, if the fashion in which the doctor pursued the wily fox was not orthodox from a Leicestershire point of view, it was for all that none the less genuine, perhaps the more so. Fox-hunting, for over a century, had been a favourite pastime with the Virginia gentry; imported from the Mother

Country at a period when such things were conducted in a very different style from that of to-day.

The hunting of the fox, as carried on in England in the eighteenth century was a very different matter, as we all know, from that seen to-day in the elaborate and gorgeous cavalcades and the fleet-footed hounds that race over the trim, well-drained turf of the shires. Sportsmen then hunted the drag at dawn and roused their fox maybe two or three hours later, to potter after it sometimes for hours with the slow-hunting hounds.

To-day, except among a small minority who understand and enjoy the science of hunting, horsemanship is practically the sole motive for the chase, when indeed it is not pursued from motives wholly alien to a real partiality for either horse or hound. With the Virginian, who was simply a survival of other days, it was nothing of the kind. The doctor knew nothing of bullfinches or of post and rails or five-barred gates, in a sporting sense ; but what he did not know about a fox was not worth knowing at all. As for his hounds, he could tell the note of each at a distance, when the music of the whole pack was scarcely audible to an ordinary ear.

So far as I remember, the doctor generally possessed about five couple, and, needless to say, he always swore they were the ' best stock of foxdogs in the state.' Jim Pendleton, his cousin across the hill, and Judge Massey, on the north side of the county, who also kept hounds, were quite prepared to make an affidavit of the same kind with regard to their own respective packs. The doctor's hounds lived as members of the family. Spasmodic efforts were made to keep them from appropriating the parlour, and so long as the weather was mild, they were fairly content to lie in the front porch, or in one of the many passages which let the air circulate freely through the Patton homestead.

If it was cold, however, and there was a fire in the parlour, the older and more knowing dogs seldom failed to eventually gain a lodgment. By persistently coming in at one door, and when kicked out by the long-suffering M.F.H. going round the house and slyly entering at the other, they invariably conquered in the long run, and established themselves on the warm bricks of the hearth before the great white-oak logs which blazed on the bright brass and irons.

It was not often, however, that the doctor and his hounds were all at home together on a winter's day. If the latter were not hunting with him, they were out upon their own account—for they were pretty much their own masters, as is the way with Virginia foxhounds. If the doctor chose to accompany them and do a great deal of tooting and some halloing, well and good. But it made no difference whatever to the sporting arrangements they had planned among themselves. Whatever happened, they were bound to have their hunt. As the doctor's interest was not in his own performances in the saddle—for he never attempted any—but in the achievements of his dogs, this want of discipline and respect was a very slight drawback to his satisfaction.

The doctor, as I have remarked, could easily combine sport and business. If he were going out in any likely direction, he would contrive to keep his hounds around him till he had dispatched his lamplight breakfast, and they would all start together. The pack, moreover, could be readily increased, for the master had only to step round to the back porch, which looked across the valley to Cousin Jim Pendleton's place, and to blow lustily on his tremendous cow-horn.

A very little of this music was sufficient to bring the greater part of the rival pack scrambling in a half-guilty way over the garden fence. After a little growling and snarling and snapping, the strangers would settle down

among the doctor's hounds as if they had been raised on the place.

Behold then our medico attired for the chase, emerging with his hounds from that awful front gate of his, which is being held up and open by the combined efforts of two stalwart negroes. It is a mild and soft February morning, at about the hour when the sun would be seen mounting over the leafless woodlands to the east of the house, if it were not for the dark banks of clouds chasing one another in continuous succession from the south-west. The doctor is not quite such a scarecrow to-day. The weather is mild, and he has left the coils of straw behind, having his stout legs encased in grey homepsun overalls. The long Mexican spur is on his left heel. The black cloak with the red lining is on his back. The slouch hat upon his head, and spectacles upon his nose. A high stand-up collar of antique build and a black stock give the finishing touch to a picture whose 'old-timiness' would have thrown a New England lady novelist into convulsions of ecstasy.

The doctor this morning is combining business with pleasure. He has to visit the widow Gubbins, who fell down the corn-house steps the week before and broke her leg. But he has had word sent him that there is a red fox in the pine-wood behind the parsonage, hard by the Gubbins domicile. I need not say the saddle-bags and the medicine-bottles are there; but besides these, there is the big cow-horn which the doctor carries slung round him, and blows upon it long blasts as he goes tit-upping down the muddy lane. These demonstrations are rather with a view to personal solace than any definite intent. The doctor loves the horn for its associations, and goes toot-tooting down the soft red road, and waking the echoes of the woods and fields mainly for his own personal benefit and refreshment. Hector and Rambler, Fairfax and Dainty, and the rest—

little, wiry, lean fellows of perhaps two-and-twenty inches—hop over the big mud-holes, or creep round the dry fence-corners waiting for the first bit of unfenced woodland to break away and commence the day's operations.

The doctor, however, is determined, if possible, to keep them in hand till they reach the haunt of that aforesaid red fox who is said to be lurking in the parson's wood. He hopes to be able to exercise sufficient authority to prevent these independent dogs of his from getting on the trail of a ringing, skulking grey fox in the first ivy thicket or open bit of forest they come to. It is no manner of use, however. The rutty, soppy road, soon after it leaves the doctor's estate, straggles unfenced through half a mile of mazy woodland. Though it is a turnpike of old coaching fame—a road the memory of whose once bustling gaiety well-nigh brings tears to the eyes of the old inhabitants—it is scarcely visible to the rare wagoner or horseman in these degenerate times, for the wealth of autumn leaves that hide its sodden face. Into the wood plunge the eager and undisciplined hounds, the dry leaves crackling and rustling under their joyous feet as they scamper and race amid the tall oak and poplar trunks, and one by one disappear beyond the very limited horizon. Their master toots and toots till not only the forest but the hills and valleys beyond reverberate to the appeals of the familiar cow-horn. Mighty little, however, care the dogs for such tooting. They look upon it as a harmless sign of encouragement, a pleasant accompaniment to the preliminaries until the more serious work begins. Nor do they care in the least when the doctor drops his horn and begins to holloa and shout and storm—not they. He might as well shout and storm at the wind. The doctor gets very mad. He doesn't swear—it wasn't a characteristic of his type—but he uses all the forms of violent exhortation that his conscience admits of, and that belong to the

local vernacular. He calls the whole pack 'grand scoundrels and villains.' In a voice grown husky with exertion, he inquires of their fast-fading forms if they know 'what in thunder he feeds them for?' He roars out to little Blazer, the only one left within good speaking distance, that he 'll 'whale the life out of him'; whereupon little Blazer disappears after the rest. So he finally confides to the sorrel mare, who is ambling along under him at the regulation five-mile-an-hour gait of the Southern roadster, that those dogs of Cousin Jeems (the doctor says 'Jeems,' not because he doesn't know any better, but because it is a good old Virginia way of pronouncing the name) are the hardest-headed lot of foxdogs south of the Potomac River.

But hark! there is a boom from the pine wood, the deep green of whose fringe can be seen far away through the naked stems and leafless branches of the oaks. The doctor pulls up; he 'concludes he 'll wait a while and see what it amounts to, anyway. The scoundrels are probably fooling after a rabbit, or, at the best, have struck the trail of a grey fox.' So he draws rein at the edge of the wood where the straggling forest road once more becomes a highway, fenced in from fields of young wheat, pasture, and red fallow. He reflects that the widow Gubbins can wait a bit, and that old red fox at the parson's lie over for another day.

'That 's old Powhatan, cert'n and sure; and that 's a fox of some sort, I 'll swar,' remarks our old friend to the sorrel mare, who pricks up her ears as another deep note comes echoing from the valley below.

It is late in February; and though February in Virginia is practically the same dead, colourless, leafless, budless, harsh winter month it is with us, yet there are sometimes days before it closes that seem to breathe of a yet distant spring with more witching treachery than the greatest effort that period can make in our more methodical clime.

And this is one of them. The soft and balmy air is laden, it is true, with no scent of blossoms nor opening buds. The odour of smouldering heaps of burning brush and weeds, or of tardily burnt tobacco plant beds, is all that as yet scents the breeze. But after a month of frost and rain and snow and clouds, the breath is the breath of spring, and the glow of the sun, now bursting through the clouds, seems no longer the sickly glare of winter.

The doctor, as he stands at the edge of the forest, would ordinarily upon such a day be deep in agricultural reveries of a most sanguine nature. But he is now waiting for one more note of evidence that there is a prospect of what he would call 'a chase'—still hesitating as to the widow Gubbins.

Suddenly there is a great commotion in the wooded valley beneath, so busy and joyful are the little pack with their tongues. 'That 's a fox anyway,' says the doctor to the sorrel mare; 'and, likely as not, a red.' Two small farmers, jogging down the road, pull up their horses and yell with the peculiar shrill scream that is traditionally as much a part of Virginia foxhunting as the familiar cries of the British hunting-field are with us. The doctor, though his voice is not what it was thirty years ago, catches the infection, and, standing up in his wooden leather-capped stirrups halloes at his hounds in what he would call 'real old Virginia fashion.'

'By G—d! it 's a red,' says one of the small farmers, who has perched himself on the top of the fence, so as to look down over the sloping tree-tops on to the opposite hill.

'The dogs are out of the wood, and are streakin' it up the broom-sedge field yonder—dawg my skin if they ain't!'

This is too much for the doctor.

'Pull down the fence, gentlemen, for God's sake! and we 'll push on up to the old Mathew's graveyard on top of the hill. We shall see right smart of the chase from there.

I know that old fox; he 'll go straight to the pines on Squire Harrison's quarter place.'

The four or five top-rails are tossed off the snake fence; but the doctor can't wait for the remaining six. The long spur is applied to the flank of the sorrel mare, the apple switch to her shoulder. Amid a crashing and scattering of rotten chestnut-rails, the doctor, cloak, and spectacles, saddle-bags, pills, medicine-bottles, and overalls, lands safely in the corn-stalk field upon the other side. The two farmers follow through the fearful breach he has made, and they may soon all be heard upon the opposite hill cheering and yelling to the hounds, which by this time are well out of reach of such encouraging sounds. Neither the country, nor the horse, nor the doctor, are adapted for riding to hounds; nor, as I have before intimated, has the latter any idea of doing so. The good soul wants to see and hear as much as possible of the run; but when he neither sees nor hears a great deal—which, when a strong red fox goes straight away, is generally the case—he will still take much delight in collecting the details from other sources.

If his hounds eventually kill their fox half-way across the county, friends and neighbours, who became accidental witnesses of various stages of the chase, and each of whom did their share of halloing and cheering, will send round word to the 'old Doctor,' or 'call by' the next time they pass his house, and cheer his heart with praises of his dogs. The doctor will probably have bandaged Mrs. Gubbins's leg, and be half-way home by the time the death-scene takes place, in some laurel thicket, miles and miles away from the corner where we left our friend bursting through the fence. Not more than half a dozen, probably, of the fourteen or fifteen hounds with which the doctor started will assist at the finish. Two or three of the puppies will have dropped out early in the day, and come home hunting

rabbits all the way. Three or four more are perhaps just over distemper, and will fall in their tracks, to come limping and crawling home at noon. The rest will turn up that night or the next day to be made much of by the doctor, who has already heard of the death of the red fox from a passing horseman, who heard of it from a negro who was present, and got the 'hide'; for Virginia hounds won't eat their fox.

The doctor's satisfaction is quite as great as if he had cut down a whole Pyletely field in the fastest thing of the season, and his heart warms towards those under-sized, harsh-coated, slab-sided little friends of his as he stands watching the negro woman breaking up their supper of hot corn-bread with buttermilk as a treat—on the back porch.

Here, however, surrounded by his dogs, we must take leave of the doctor, or rather I should say of this brief memorial of him, for the good old man himself has been laid this many a year by his wife's side under the orchard turf. Nor do I even know to whom he 'ar'd his place. But on whoever or whatever this dubious blessing may have fallen, I will undertake to say that he bears very little resemblance to his predecessor, who was the product of a social condition that has for a generation ceased to exist, and of a period that is irrevocably dead.

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While the Pattons, as I have already indicated, were indelibly associated with Berkeley County, and have lived there ever since it was created in Queen Anne's reign, everybody knows that the older and more easterly county of Sassafras has never been without Broomsedges since time was in Virginia.

The present Colonel Broomsedge of Locust Grove, another old foxhunter and frequent host of mine, had fought through the war and come out of it with a whole skin, if with a very

much reduced estate. It was not, however, as a retired military man I would recall the colonel, but as a Nimrod of a still more serious and ardent description than the doctor himself. For the colonel gave himself up wholly to the sport and made it in fact the business of his life ; troubling himself about little else. He was probably the last landowner in Virginia that after the war continued to devote himself so entirely to the sport of kings.

After the surrender of Lee at Appomattox Court House the colonel had settled down in his old home of Locust Grove, and on the fifteen hundred acres of very indifferent land which surrounded it. And when he did so, he thought for a time, like most of his friends, that the world, so far as he was concerned, had practically come to an end.

He had owned about a hundred negroes, or say fifteen families, and it was they rather than the ancestral acres on which he supported them that constituted his chief substance. And now they were gone ; that is to say, as a moneyed property they were gone. Otherwise, most of them remained as freemen in the same cabins they had inhabited as slaves. When their chains were struck off by Lincoln's proclamation, it is doubtful whether they or the colonel were the more bewildered. The latter, as was customary with most of his class in Virginia, had been a kindly master. If there had been any tyranny on the plantation at all, it was old Uncle Gabriel, who had been a sort of house steward, that was the tyrant, and the colonel the victim. The word 'freedom,' indeed, as applied to Gabriel, would have been an immense joke ; and his master was accustomed to declare that, when he called all the negroes together and told them they were free, the only genuine throb of liberty which was felt in the assemblage was experienced beyond a doubt by himself in relation to the long tyranny of Uncle Gabriel.

But the colonel's joy was premature. Old Gabriel stuck to him, and lectured him, and tyrannised over him, and called him 'Mar'se Bob,' till he died, and had the biggest negro funeral I ever saw, with the colonel as chief mourner, looking five years younger than he had done at any period since the war.

When, in the later sixties, the ruined South began life afresh, none of the colonel's people wanted to leave him. A free nigger, to them, had been a stray nigger without a master—an object of contempt to such as belonged to a family of quality like the colonel's. Such ideas were very soon modified ; but, for a time at any rate, there was little migration. Formerly the colonel had found them in food, clothes, and medical attendance, not to speak of small presents of money from time to time. Now, however, the estate was parcelled out among the various families, and conducted upon what political economists denominate the Metayer system, but what the colonel's negroes called 'wukin' on sheares.'

This arrangement suited the colonel down to the ground. It would furnish, for his time at any rate, the actual necessaries of life. He had no children. His wife, good soul, had had a long innings of both the social pleasures and domestic burdens of the slavery period. For it was upon women of her position that the latter fell most heavily ; and, altogether, 'the colonel's lady' was perhaps not altogether sorry to be able in her old age to relinquish them.

During these horrible years of war, when half a million of men were butchering one another on the soil of Virginia, and when even the quiet shades of Locust Grove were startled from time to time by the distant roar of guns or the red light of battle in the sky, there was not much foxhunting, as may be well imagined. The pack, which had been the pride of the colonel's heart, and the terror of Sassafras County

foxes, had sadly decayed : two or three old dogs and a few riotous young ones, to whom fox, rabbit, or coon came equally handy, were all that remained. But by the time I first knew the colonel he had resuscitated his pack, and had discovered that life, after all, was still worth living. If half of his neighbours had been killed or crippled, and all of them more or less ruined by the war, he found that he could, at any rate, scratch along somehow, and devote himself much as of old to the absorbing pursuit of his life—that of foxes. His wants were few, and the system of agriculture pursued by his Ethiopian tenants didn't fret him in the least.

Moreover, the leaden hail that had wrought such havoc upon men and horses, and indirectly even upon hounds, had created a veritable heyday for foxes, and they had thriven so vigorously in Sassafras County that a sore and bitter cry went up from the newly restocked poultry yards and sheepfolds. So when the colonel settled down to devote the remainder of his days to the pursuit of Reynard, he had the satisfaction of feeling that he was at the same time a public benefactor of the first importance.

In former days there had been at least half a dozen small packs of hounds in Sassafras County. Fox-hunting had, in fact, been the chief sport of the gentry in East Virginia. Foxhounds, and even foxes, had been imported from England in the eighteenth century to fill the measure of that rural life which, thanks to slavery, had become so rudely comfortable and uneventfully pleasant. The English red fox was imported because the indigenous grey species was found to be but a second-rater, clinging to the woodlands, and with all the 'ringing' instincts of the hare. The imported varmint throve, but not abundantly, never interbreeding with the native, and maintaining to this day those straight-going qualities which have made him at once the

delight and the despair of so many generations of Virginia sportsmen, with their slow hounds and rough country. But with these grey foxes also the Virginian hounds got plenty of blood, and maintained thereby a stout heart in those long all-day runs after the scarcer red fox, which so often failed to end in a kill. But all the more on these latter occasions was the ambition of the colonel fired to achieve success. And when his wiry little favourites fairly raced an ' old red ' down after a four or five, or perhaps even a seven or eight hours' run, there was no prouder or happier man between the Alleghanies and the Atlantic. He didn't often see very much of these big performances himself, but he plodded along on his slow, soft-conditioned, long-tailed horse over the deep corn fallows and rough Broomsedge pastures and open leaf-strewn woodlands, listening with delight and keen, knowing ears to the fast fading music. And when his hounds had swept beyond both sight and hearing, he would tit-up along, picking out the line from labourers in the fields or travellers on the roads, who would have often halloed themselves hoarse as the hounds passed in sight. He would have felt, too, would this primitive sportsman, just as much elated at the fashion in which his hounds were pushing this old fox along, though he was not with them, as if he were a thruster of the first water showing his heels to a whole Leicestershire field. Washington, for example, when he was at home at Mount Vernon, was a most enthusiastic foxhunter. His diary takes careful note of the days he hunted, which were many, the sport he had, and often the company he hunted with. He took immense pains with his breed of hounds, which were famous in Virginia for long afterwards. And he seems, moreover, to have kept several horses for hunting purposes only. His diary, too, seems to indicate that his lady guests—and his house was generally full—sometimes hunted with the

gentlemen, but, as a matter of fact, southern women, though they could all of necessity sit on a horse, took very little interest in sport.

The ancestral halls of the Broomsedge family were in excellent harmony with their master, and both were eminently picturesque, perhaps, rather in a social than a purely artistic sense—and in a fashion peculiar to Virginia. The date upon the chimneys was 1769 ; but Broomsedges were there fifty years before that, at least—in a former house, as the gravestones in the walled burying-ground across the fence would tell us, even if the colonel had not been sometimes given to making his ancestry the burden of his conversation. The bricks of the present structure, under a climate of comparative extremes, had assumed an almost venerable aspect, and the narrow windows, with their small panes, suggested the fashion of other days. Nor were signs of dilapidation and decay wanting to give the necessary touch of sentiment to the stronghold of a race whose doom, as a class, had been sounded. For no country houses such as this will ever again be built in Virginia for gentle-folk to live in from generation unto generation. City merchants will erect convenient villas, and farmers will build farmhouses, but even the latter will be what the colonel called ' Yankee contraptions.' No present or future architect, for instance, will ever contrive such a porch as that which towered above the front door of the Broomsedge mansion. Its roof was on a level with the lofty eaves of the house, and the tall columns which supported it supported also two landings, an upper and a lower. The upper landing opening from the bedrooms was convenient for the airing of mattresses. Upon the lower one before the front door, when the heat was too great for his favourite tree, or when it was raining, sat the colonel, with two or three of his most favoured hounds at his feet.

From the back of the house innumerable outbuildings of various dates and in all stages of disrepair staggered away in quaint procession towards the barns and stables, and on either side a row of negro cabins told a significant tale of other days. Much cherished oaks of noble stature threw their limbs heavenwards, and buried in grateful shade the whole easy-going colony beneath them. In front of the house upon the lawn, however, there were only ornamental trees—maples, mulberries, silver aspens, and mimosas—and these the colonel had taken good care should not obstruct his view of the highroad, which was barely fifty yards away. For the old gentleman had a passion for conversation even above the passion of the average Virginian, which is saying a great deal. And as he sat upon the porch or with his chair tilted back against his favourite mulberry-tree, he kept his eye fastened on the road. And the traveller who was shouted to by the colonel to ' lite and sit awhile,' and could resist that tone of hospitable command, must have been an individual wholly unsuited to dwell upon Virginian soil—some despicable pettifogger who carried a watch about and grudged an hour or two for genial interchange of views on politics, or farming, or the war, or foxhunting. For the colonel could talk well on anything from the British Constitution, of which he was an ardent admirer, to local agriculture, in which you might have supposed he was a shining light if you had heard him hold forth on curing tobacco or fallowing for wheat, and did not at the same time know his habits, or I may add his farms, and he could also tell some very fine stories.

But it is the colonel as a man of action, the colonel in the winter season, and above all upon hunting mornings, that I would feign to recall. These hunting days of his, I need hardly say, were nothing in the shape of fixtures. No local papers advertised his meets, no sporting correspondents

chronicled his doings. No rendezvous or prearrangement was of any use, for no neighbours ever any longer joined him as they had often done before the war—in the brave days of old—bringing their dogs to run against his, and dining together afterwards, and talking politics and foxhunting and wheat and tobacco till all was blue. The colonel hunted now for himself alone, and by himself, and just when he felt inclined, which was about three days a week, perhaps, when the weather was propitious.

Sometimes, too, like the doctor, he hunted, as it were, under compulsion—that is to say, he might have himself made other plans, but his hounds would occasionally break out upon their own account, and he had of course to go with them. For only some of his small pack were regularly kennelled, and that often in some empty tobacco barn, beneath whose logs, with a little industry, they could generally scratch their way out. The rest lay around loose, and spent their days upon the porch, or under it, or in the dining-room till they were kicked out. And in the nights, if the weather were cold or rainy, they not infrequently crawled through convenient draught holes in the underspinney, and found snug domicile in the gloomy caverns that intervened between the floors of the house and its foundations. It was by no means unusual while seated at supper round the colonel's hospitable board to be conscious of fearsome sounds beneath your feet, which seemed to come from the very bowels of the earth, but as a matter of fact were nothing more than a portion of the colonel's pack contending for bone or bed.

But not all the terror of the colonel's boot, nor yet Uncle Gabriel's lash, could deter them from taking now and again, as I have hinted, a day's hunting on their own account. Indeed, on more than one occasion, when staying with this fine old sportsman, I have been waked in the dark of a

winter morning by the sound of heavy blows upon the colonel's door, and old Uncle Gabriel shouting at him somewhat after this fashion :

'Mar'se Robert ! Aw, Mar'se Robert ! '

'What 's the matter now ? '

'Dem ar dawgs is off agin, I hearn 'em runnin' fur all they 's wuth at the upper een of old man Dan'l's cornfield.'

Then there would be the sound as of a heavy body falling, and the old house would shake almost to its foundations as the colonel rolled his two hundred pounds avoirdupois out of bed, and roared out of the window for his horse and down the stairs for his morning 'julep.'

In ten minutes he would be on his horse, thoughts of vengeance and chastisement having alone consumed him while hustling on his clothes. But by the time the old gentleman has got clear of the yard, and cantered out past the stables and barns, tobacco houses and negro cabins, he can hear the hounds still running, and thinking that an illicit hunt is better than none at all, he begins to blow loud blasts on his big cow-horn, relieving himself of his anger thereby, and fetching out from various shelters far and near those of the pack that had not played truant.

But these after all were but occasional irregularities. The colonel upon most hunting days sallied forth with dignity and in order—a good breakfast in addition to his early 'julep' beneath his generous breadth of waistcoat, and his pack, small, wiry, wizened little fellows of two- or three-and-twenty inches perhaps, following demurely at his heels as if they had never done such a thing in their lives as take 'bye days' upon their own account. The colonel knew nothing of eleven o'clock meets. His rule in winter was to throw off (though he didn't use that term) before sunrise, and his horn sounded along the country roads as often as not before the first streak of day had

broken. Old man Gabriel still sometimes went with his master, mounted on a plough mule all rubbed and chafed by collar and trace chains, and the two might have been heard as they splashed along the muddy road talking somewhat after this fashion:

'I reckon we 'll see if we can't scare up that old red that beat us last week from the doctor's pine wood.'

'Thar 's two or three greys, Cunnel, 'twixt here an dar in dem ivy thickets, and if de dawgs strike ther trail they 's gone fur sho, and thar ain't no fence to de road neither.'

'That 's so, Gabriel; we 'd better get out here and cross old man Caleb's wheat, and down over the doctor's cornfield.'

And as old Gabriel rolls off his mule to let down the slip bars for the colonel and his hounds to go through, it would have been light enough to enable us to make a note or two upon the former's appearance, which, to put the matter mildly, is unconventional to a degree. There is not much Melton Mowbray about the colonel, that 's quite certain. From his slouch hat to his wooden stirrups, from his grey homespun coat to his rusty boots, there is nothing that would not absolutely outrage every tradition of a sportsman's 'turn-out.' A pair of high, old-fashioned stick-up collars fastened at the back with string, indicate in a measure the depths of conservatism that lurk within the breast of their wearer, while with his honest rosy face and white moustache and snowy bushy hair (which his wife cuts twice a year) he looks the thorough good fellow he is, and the well-bred gentleman withal, in spite of his astonishing rusticity of attire. As if, too, he flouted almost by design every convention, though as a matter of fact he really knows nothing about such things—the colonel carries the sprout of an apple tree for a whip, and wears spurs that have never been cleaned since the war. But the colonel wouldn't care a blankety blank what anybody thought of his appearance,

and would wonder what in creation his clothes had to do with hounds or foxes.

When the colonel and Gabriel reach the doctor's pines, there is very little ceremony in the way the eager hounds anticipate their movements and throw themselves into the ten acres of green woodland through which a stream fringed with now naked alders winds its way. The two old sportsmen, the Anglo-Saxon and the African, master and ex-slave, united by their lifelong passion for the chase, take up their stand outside and wait for that music which to each of them is the sweetest sound in life.

There have been whimpers already from the covert, but the old colonel knows the language of his hounds as the parent does of his children, and which of them it is talking, and what it amounts to, whether it is Trumpeter 'foolin' after an ole har,' or Beauregard 'triflin' on a possum trail,' or Rattler with confident and trustworthy note proclaiming the presence of nobler game. And sure enough on this occasion, too, it is this celebrated hound who wakes the colonel and Uncle Gabriel from their reverie, and in a few moments the whole pack have answered to his well-known summons.

There is then great music for a space, and it grows greater, and the two old men outside the wood listen to it in silent rapture.

'Mar'se Robert,' says Gabriel, as the situation intensifies, 'that ar ole red 'll hev to quit, I reckon.' And even as he speaks a big red fox breaks covert not a hundred yards from the corner they are standing at, and faces the open with an air of confidence in himself and contempt for the colonel's already defeated endeavours that warms up that old warrior mightily.

'That 's the gentleman that beat us, Gabriel; that 's him! I 'll swear I know every hair on his durned hide.'

Then indeed is the time to see this veteran pair, perhaps

at their very best, and hear a notable duet. Old man Gabriel is standing in his stirrups—one of them, by the way, hung on with a rope—and at the very top of his power and lungs is giving the shrill Virginia hunting cry that does sole duty for each stage of the chase, with his hat in his hand and his bald black wrinkled head fringed with a circlet of short silvery hair, and his mouth wide open and his withered frame shaking with excitement. The colonel at his side has got to work on his big cow-horn, and with cheeks puffed out and the colour of a ripe tomato is filling earth, air, and sky with its tremendous blasts.

Out come the hounds on the line one after the other and in straggling fashion, but none the less keen and always full of music. It is nothing from their pace that the sturdy fox who has just disappeared over the top of the wheat-field has to fear, but they may wear him out, and run into him at midday or even in the afternoon, for the tenacity and hardiness and scenting powers of the colonel's hounds are remarkable if they have little speed. Old Gabriel, whose powers of sporting narrative have been the delight of two generations of loafers at the village post-office, whence he fetches the colonel's letters daily, has some most fearsome stories of long runs in the days of old. That celebrated hunt which took place in Christmas week 1831, when 'the senator, Mar'se Robert's pa, kep' de hounds,' is known to every one in Sassafras County. We were never tired of making Uncle Gabriel tell that story, for the old man had come to believe in it himself most firmly for the last half-century or so ; and I think, upon the whole, it was the most magnificent lie I ever heard recited in cold blood and in detail, and by a member of a church too. 'Yes, suh, fo' Gawd I 's tellin' you de solemn troof. Dem ar dawgs run dat ar ole fox fur two days an' two nights clar through. It wur de day befo' Christmas, dey struck de trail, and when

ole man quit off hunt'n at sundown he done tell me ter foller dem hounds and see whar they 's gwine ter. Well, suh, I follerd 'em all dat night. I follerd 'em all Christmas Day and all dat night too, and when I caught up wid 'em jes as sho' as yo' born, suh, it wur over in Hanover County about'n hour after sun-up, and fo' de Lawd de fox was *walkin'*, and de hounds was *walkin'*, dey was all *walkin'*, widin a few yards of one nur'r.'

How this old Ananias gathered up the emaciated voiceless hounds and the exhausted fox, and put them all in a two-horse wagon and drove them home, I always suspected was a comparatively recent addition. But Gabriel invariably recited the legend with his hat in his hand, as if baring his head for the vengeance of Heaven to descend upon it—as, indeed, he frequently invited it to do—should he deviate one hairsbreadth from the ' solemn troof.'

From what has been said in an earlier part of this paper, it will be readily understood that there was no eager shortening of stirrup leathers or cramming on of hats with the colonel and Uncle Gabriel as the hounds went away. At the same time the red dirt flew for a brief space from the doctor's wheat-field in a fashion that testified to the ardour with which these veterans, lying back in their saddles with their legs thrown in Southern manner straight forward, sent the long-tailed half-bred and the plough mule up the sticky slope. It is only, however, a spasmodic burst of excitement. There is a snake fence on the ridge, and as Gabriel rolls off the mule to throw down a panel, he finds breath for two or three more halloes.

' Praise de Lord, Cunnel, I kin holler good on a fox chase yit, tho' you is got me down as mighty nigh eighty on de book.' [1]

[1] The old register in which the birth, death, age, etc., of slaves were entered.

Space forbids us to follow our old friend as he potters along far in the wake for the present, at any rate, of his hounds. I think, however, from what I have said of the colonel, it will be readily understood that this astute old gentleman, steeped to the lips in the ways of hounds and foxes, will be very apt to see something more of the fun before it is all over. And even should he not do so, and his dogs after all kill their fox at some remote point miles away, he will be just as pleased as if he had ridden at their heels to the finish. Indeed, from the colonel's obsolete point of view, due to habit and circumstances, there is no very clear connection in his mind between foxhunting and horsemanship. I wish, too, I was able once again to follow him home and sit with him for a bit in the old wainscoted dining-room beneath the stolid portraits of bygone Broomsedges, and listen to his cheery yarns of hounds and foxes and politics and war, when the long reed pipe is lit and the oak logs are roaring on the big brick hearth.

But this, alas, is nowadays all ancient history. The colonel's cow-horn has long ceased to rouse the echoes of the Virginia woodlands. It is many long years now since I stood by his grave, even then not entirely a fresh-made one. And as I stood there in the old graveyard to the west of the house, amid a scene of ruin and decay, it was borne in upon me how great was the gulf between the past and the future in the South, and what a fine race were those old Virginia squires; and I thought then, as I have often thought before and since, how really lamentable it is they found no contemporary chronicler of fame in whose pages they might live again, and as a type acquire some measure of immortality. None arose, however, and now it is too late—for they are gone.

CHAPTER XI

THE 'POOR WHITES' OF THE MOUNTAINS

The Blue Bridge ran right down the state of Virginia from north to south-west, and parallel with the Alleghanies, being an eastern outwork of that greater and much deeper range, thrust forward about thirty miles. Between the two lay that beautiful district generally known as the Shenandoah Valley, and comparatively immune from the sterilising and blighting hand of slavery, a country of smaller farms yielding good grass and grain. An Indian frontier in the earlier eighteenth century, it had been settled by hardy Presbyterians from Ulster, who did more to build up the United States for their numbers than any other stock—a fact well recognised in America—good and thrifty farmers, and not growing much tobacco. Slavery never took strong hold among them. The land was in good heart, and held at a good price. For the war had, with a few exceptions, affected them infinitely less than it had the slave-owners, with their freer habits and large ragged farms to the east of the Blue Bridge. They were a very different people, too, these yeomen, from any class of the Anglo-Virginians across the mountains. They had the Scotch-Irish traits which, admirable as they are for making the desert bloom, and organising it when tamed, were not in harmony with the easy-going sociability of the Virginians proper. This mattered nothing, as the Blue Ridge, virtually impassable but at long intervals, divided them, and they were all 'good

Virginians' alike, in action and sentiment, much as they differed in habit and manner. But in the wooded fastnesses of the Blue Ridge, which you could cross at a walk on horseback in a short day, were sparsely scattered altogether another sort of people, who had no truck with those beneath them, either on the east or on the west. There were, and are, I believe, three million 'poor whites,' or 'mean whites,' in the Southern States, the miserable by-products of the slavery system, a race of the same blood, Anglo-Saxon for the most part (for the faintest touch of negro blood, it must be remembered, makes a negro), as the others. But pushed off the track in generations past on to the waste places of the land, they lead, as illiterate and half-civilised pariahs, an aimless, hopeless life. They vary according to their habitat. But the Blue Ridge contains what may be termed a subdivision of the breed, with certain characteristics, due to conditions of locality, climate, and opportunities, or rather the lack of them, under which they vegetate. They are not always vegetables, however. For their very ignorance makes them the victims of unrestrained passions and sanguinary feuds, usually among themselves. They don't often come in conflict with the outer world, which begins at either base of the mountains, unless the outer world goes hunting after them, which it rarely does. It is, in truth, an extraordinary situation. Imagine the Cheviots, which are wider than the Blue Ridge, though not so difficult of access, inhabited by a race of semi-savage pariahs who practise vendettas, and make illicit whisky at will! For Eastern Virginia is as civilised for all practical purposes as Northumberland, and 'The Valley' as the Scottish lowlands. That the mountaineers, too, have made no progress since I knew them has been tolerably proven while these pages are being actually written. For the first time in their history they have been the subject of a whole column

of cabled news in the leading English papers, and of illustrations in those devoted to pictorial matters. Indeed the Craig County Highlanders surpassed the other day any previous performances known to me. Soon after I bade a final adieu to my mountain friends, treated of in this chapter, a gang of them, who objected to the usual course of justice, opened fire in the court-house, where their friend's case was proceeding, but on this occasion only killed a woman before they were overpowered. Down at the little county capital of Craig, however, the other day, they literally raked the Bench, jury-box, and witness-stand with revolvers, killing the judge, and wounding several highly respectable and peaceful persons, and getting safely away on horseback to the mountains afterwards, where I doubt if they were ever caught!

To look up at the Blue Ridge from its base, you would hardly suppose that a vestige of life lurked beneath that vast green canopy of leaves, which climbs the sky to the height of nearly four thousand feet. A familiar eye might detect here and there the corner of a clearing peeping above the shoulders of the hills, while in early spring clouds of smoke rising from some burning new ground proclaim to the dwellers in the world below that human life of some sort exists up in those wild aerial woods. This indeed is about all that most people ever see of the mountain men.

There are exceptions, however, and Pete was an exception. Pete, indeed, was a very chieftain among mountaineers, and was, moreover, well known in the low country for many miles round, while his cabin guarded the narrow entrance to his dominions. At the very foot of the 'big mountain' (as distinguished from the spurs and foothills), right in the angle where the north and south forks of Rumbling Creek tumbled their respective waters together in a

churning and limpid pool, stood the mansion of this illustrious man. Here, too, with the dividing stream the rough road divides also, and by the side of these stony tracks, and on the banks of these rocky streams, reaching far away up to the highest gaps between the mountain peaks, were scattered at long intervals the isolated cabins of Pete's subjects. Pete's house, as I have said, stood, as befits his autocratic position, at the forks of road and stream, and no one could get up the mountain on business or pleasure bent without undergoing the scrutiny of his ever-watchful eye. The logs of his house, too, were squared and not merely round poles unbarked, like the architecture higher up the creek. It contained also three rooms, while the chimney was also a departure from other chimneys on Rumbling Creek, for it was of rocks, not of sticks filled in with mud.

One other fact placed Pete on a pinnacle in his community —he could write. This is the last letter he wrote to me :

Dr. Sur,—Thars trowte in the Crick by a heap mo' nor lars yer. Cum orn rite soon. Thars tu walers in the hole at the forx. Yrs respcfly, Pete Robison.

No strangers indeed but anglers, and they were scarce enough, unless it were the sheriff or an occasional cattle-dealer crossing the range by this rough route, ever penetrated beyond the forks of the creek where Pete's house stood. And few of these passed his door without alighting. Whether the subject in hand were trout or cattle, horse-thieves or whisky-stills, Pete's countenance and advice was almost indispensable. For our friend was not only an exceedingly smart man in his way, but an original character of the most pronounced description. What is more, he was known as a ' 'sponsible mount'n man,' a unique departure from ordinary rules, and a far greater exception than a responsible Ethiopian. Pete had never been suspected of

stealing a steer or setting fire to a barn. People had even been known to pay him money on account before the completion of contracts for shingles, which with an ordinary mountaineer would have been a most fatuous proceeding. Old Senator Tucker, the big man of the country just below the mountain, used in former days to ask Pete down to play the banjo and tell 'bar stories' to the fine folks from Washington staying in his house. For there was no one on the mountain, nor a negro below it, could 'pick a banjer' like Pete. Many a night, after assisting at one of those mountain suppers that nothing but lusty youth could have survived, have I sat and smoked while Pete twanged at his banjo and crooned out his quaint medley of negro airs and Baptist hymns. Strange performances, of a truth, with sometimes an audience of wild mountain men, drawn together by the rare news of a stranger's arrival, standing round in the flickering firelight, and beating time with their often shoeless feet upon the rough boarded floor. Outside was the chorus of frogs and crickets, the intermittent cries of the screech-owl and the cat-bird, the roar and gleam of white waters, the flashing of the fire-flies against the black gloom of the night and the forest.

It was a local pleasantry that the Southern Highlander had, through isolation, ignorance and apathy, so lost the human form divine, as to be indistinguishable at any distance in the woods from a cedar-stump or a fence-rail stuck upon end. Pete, however, represented a very different variety. He was short and thick, with long arms. Everything visible, except his eyes, seemed covered with black shaggy hair. If a human being could be like a bear, Pete was that man. Our friend was almost thrifty. He had a young horse of his own, whereas most of the folks higher up the creek had to be content with a share in an old one. His house outside, as I have said, was quite superior. Inside

you would have said it was absolutely luxurious, if you had begun to pay calls at the top of the mountain instead of coming up from the country below. A long Kentucky rifle, and underneath it the banjo, were suspended above the chimneypiece in the living-room. Here, too, was the marital bedstead, resplendent in frilled pillowcases and patchwork quilt; also an oak dresser which, with the smoke-stained logs of the wall, and that Pete used to declare his great-grandfather had brought from 'out thar'—a phrase expressing the mountaineer's foggy notion of the Mother Country. Pods of red pepper and twists of home-grown tobacco depended from the rafters, while on the wall hung a pedlar's coloured print of Washington on the seeming verge of an apoplectic fit, and a realistic representation of Lazarus emerging from the tomb. There was also a guest-chamber, where weary anglers, and an occasional benighted traveller, might dispose their tired limbs on straw mattresses of adamantine texture, and resign themselves to tortures from unseen foes, which, at this distance of time, may be passed over in silence.

For land, there were two acres of clover and struggling apple-trees, and a clearing of twenty acres on the slope of the mountain above. In the latter Pete had grown crop after crop in succession, and was wont to declare that the steadily shrinking yield was the result of the wickedness of the times generally. Mrs. Pete, however, insisted it was a sign of the approaching end of the world, and that carnival of flame and torture which so fascinates the imagination of the illiterate Calvinist.

Pete had seen quite a bit of life for a mountaineer, as he had been through the war. He was the only man probably on the mountain who had felt the least enthusiasm for the Southern cause, and he had been more than once detailed to hunt up deserters with which the gorges of the Blue Ridge

at that time swarmed. He knew every cave in the mountains and every trail. He still recounted with much feeling the exciting chases his truant neighbours used to give him in those stormy days. Many a rifle-shot they then exchanged was now joked over as they huddled together over the winter fire, about as much influenced for good or ill by that great strife as if they were living in the Sandwich Islands.

Mrs. Pete was a typical mountain woman, gaunt of figure, and with a skin like dried parchment stretched over her projecting bones. Dismal, lethargic, ignorant, inanimate, she would sit for hours before the fire in the broken rocking chair, smoking a pipe, and crooning out disconnected lamentations regarding the state of her soul. Poor woman, mighty little attraction had there been for her to wander off along the broad and easy road. Her greatest trial was the wickedness of Pete, who had never even 'professed.' That Pete was by far the most honest and reliable man on the mountain would, from her distorted standpoint, have amounted to nothing in the absence of those hysterical demonstrations which she had been taught by some travelling tub-thumper to regard as the equivalent of righteousness.

Following the winding of the narrow glen, sometimes clinging to the wooded hillside, sometimes descending to the level of the stream, toiled upward the rugged, stony track that is the highway of the mountaineer. Little clusters of cabins broke at long intervals the rich and varied foliage of the forest, miserable enough to be the tenements of a third or fourth, or even the fifth and sixth generation, of Anglo-Saxons in this land of phenomenal progress. The roofs were of riven white oak-boards, curled and twisted by sun and weather, the walls of rough, unbarked logs, enclosing a single room, the chimneys of sticks and mud. Outside

was a small garden-patch fenced in with chestnut rails, where a few common vegetables, beans or onions, bespoke the richness of the loose black mountain soil. To each house belonged a cow, wandering in the woods, making in summer a tolerable living on the bushes and weeds, but passing every winter through a critical period of want and weakness, when the slender store of corn-fodder began to fail. Emaciated hogs stretched themselves in the sun among the warm rocks, lean as greyhounds, whose only chance of making bacon lay in the still unformed fruit of the oaks and chestnuts that spread their branches above them. The women around the settlement, in sunbonnets, short jackets, and draggled cotton skirts, were more in evidence than the men, and nowhere else in the world, I am quite sure, have the Anglo-Saxon race produced such unattractive, degenerate-looking females. The peasant girl of Europe may not be all that poetic fancy sometimes paints her, but she at least has health and comeliness, a wholesome colour, and a cheerful mien. The woman of these Virginia mountains has often a sort of wiriness and tenacity of life; but she carries no sign of health in her bony figure and drawn, colourless face. The men in these early summer seasons, when the rest of rural mankind, north, south, or west, were in their various fashions snatching the fleeting hour, may be in the corn-patch on the mountain above, but are as likely to be loafing through the woods in listless Indian fashion, rifle in hand, or wandering by the brooks with their rough sapling rods and tackle. Though trout, squirrels, an occasional turkey, with now and then a portion of a deer or bear in their respective seasons are to be obtained, no dependence can be placed on such additions to the larder of the Blue Ridge mountaineer in those annual periods of semi-starvation through which he generally passed. Game was none too plentiful in these

narrow ranges at any period. If these cabins and clearings had been on some western frontier, the mere passing features of advancing civilisation, symbols of hope, not of resigned stagnation, they would not be worth taking note of. But here there was neither hope nor any consciousness that such a thing existed. There was no future, no anything, on this backwash of the oldest civilisation in North America.

And yet this same civilisation, which had automatically cast them out, had been, through all these generations, within easy sight. There was hardly a bend in the road up the gorge of Rumbling Creek, from which, if you turned in your saddle, you couldn't look down over the tree-tops upon the rolling plain of old Virginia, which meant so little to the mountaineer. The very roofs of the plantation-houses, catching the sun ten or fifteen miles away, flashed from point to point as the eye ranged far over the warm and glowing stretch of field and forest. The white smoke of a train might be seen trailing northward towards Washington, but a few hours' distant. Senators, congressmen, merchants, millionaires, tourists from beyond the seas, might be in it, watching, beyond any doubt, with admiration the ever-changing outline of the glorious crags upon whose sides we stood. But the senator and the foreign tourist were pretty much upon a par, for all that one or the other knew of the dwellers upon Rumbling Creek, who were merely one type of a population that runs into millions. The peasant of Connemara is in close touch with the world compared to these people.

For what life was, and is, upon the head-waters of Rumbling Creek, so, with slightly varying conditions, is it in scores of other valleys in the Southern mountains. Better land and more abundant game modify material conditions, but all more or less belong to the same primitive non-progressive class, a people out of touch with every single thing that

the name of America suggests to the outside world. Books were unknown, for there were no scholars. But Pete could read, and the county paper once a week found its way to that worthy, who transmitted the news up the mountain.

Nor was life wholly without excitement. Even on Rumbling Creek, if wheaten bread was at a discount and hogs-meat sometimes woefully scarce, there were weddings once in a while, when some buck from the north fork of the Creek crossed the mountain and brought back a barefooted bride from the further side of the range. There was great picking of banjos then, and much 'patting' and dancing of the mountain boys on the loose undressed planks of the cabin floors. And there was Pete to perform the ceremony if the wandering Baptist preacher from Juniper Creek, ten miles to the southward, couldn't be found in time. A new cabin was then run up in some hollow even still more remote than the rough highway on which the old folks live. Another five or six acres of oak and chestnut, poplar and gum, maple and hickory, was belted and killed, to become grim and naked skeletons amid the wilderness of verdure. And under these bare trunks and unsightly limbs another half-worked corn-crop was fated to struggle with only partial success against bushes, squirrels, and crows. As for funerals, that festival so dear to the negro, I had almost said that the people in these mountains never die. In spite of hard winters, when for three or four weeks together both forks of Rumbling Creek choked and gurgled under heavy crusts of ice; when the rude grist-mill below Pete's house was silent, and what little corn there might be left on the mountain could not be ground; and when the winter wind howled through the gaping chinks of the cabins, and drove the mountaineer close into his one luxury, a blazing hearth,—in spite of all these and many other annually recurring inconveniences, and in spite, too, of his lantern jaws, his

parchment skin, his irregularly filled stomach, the native of the Blue Ridge seemed almost to defy death. There were men of seventy in these mountains, wandering in summertime along the streams, who talked as naturally as lads about their 'pa up yonder.' And there, sure enough, at the cabin in the woods above, you would find the veteran himself, seated probably on a straw chair on the shady side of the house, puffing at a long pipe and shaking his head at the very mention of time, as if it had long past his reckoning powers.

The population on Rumbling Creek live mostly in small settlements—clusters of half a dozen cabins set more or less together, with long intervals of forest between. These settlements in great measure represent different families, or at least clans of the same name. Feuds deep and bitter between clan and clan sometimes blazed out, and agitated the mountains from base to summit. The knife and the bullet played their part often enough, and the county sheriff could tell many a tale of pursuit, generally fruitless, over these pathless hills. On such occasions indeed it was towards Pete that the majesty of the law generally looked. The most determined officer, in such a wilderness, would have had a poor chance, unaided by local experience, of hunting down a transgressor. Pete felt his importance to the full on such occasions. It was pretty well known that it was he who decided beforehand in his own mind on the veniality of the 'cuttin'' or 'shootin',' and arranged for escape or capture as seemed good to his judicial mind. Pete belonged to no sept, so was supposed to be free from all personal bias. From the very rare occasions on which an offender was actually brought to justice we may conclude that he was not rigid in his views upon the use of deadly weapons in dispute. Few Southerners indeed of any kind are even yet quite pronounced upon that point, and certainly no mountaineers.

The nomenclature on Rumbling Creek was amazing. The surnames were common English or Irish ones, but the Christian or 'given' names, in which the local imagination had full play, surpassed in extravagance even those of the plantation negroes. Pete's immediate neighbours, for instance, consist of a father of eighty and three middle-aged sons. The former's name was Micajah, the latter were familiarly known as Atch, Phil, and Pole, names hardly worthy of comment perhaps, if you hadn't chanced to find out that they were short for Achilles, Philander, and Napoleon.

Co-operation of any kind had always been a difficulty on the mountain. A little way above Pete's house, by the side of the stream, the uncompleted log body of a house, fast gathering moss, had stood for years. Pete, at some former period, urged forward probably by his devout helpmate, had decided that it was a disgrace to the mountain that its people had no place of worship. Logs were therefore cut and hauled, so many apiece, by the various families. When it came to the 'raising,' however, and a general gathering of the clans was necessary, every attempt resulted, after a log or two had been put up, in what Pete called 'a fuss'—and a 'fuss' in the South means a free fight. So the church had to be finally abandoned, and the wandering preacher to continue his intermittent exhortations in Pete's living-room, or under the arches of the forest trees.

The trout of Rumbling Creek had always been a leading item in the economy of the mountain—not merely as an article of food, though there are no sweeter trout in the world than these. But the native, as a rule, had been satiated with them, and had to be exceedingly hard pressed before he had any relish for what his betters considered a luxury. Of fishing, however, he never tired, and if he ventured out of the mountain to the nearest village

store, it was generally to exchange trout for coffee or ammunition. The sport itself seemed to exercise no little fascination over these rude beings, and there was considerable rivalry among them. Until the days I speak of, the art of fly-fishing was undreamed of, and even now it is only a very adventurous sportsman among the mountaineers who attains to that pinnacle of science. Worm-fishing, however, in clear water is, as all anglers know, something of an art in itself, and in this art the rude fishermen of Rumbling Creek excelled. Pete always claimed to be the best fisherman of the mountain. Deep and almost bitter was the rivalry for pre-eminence between him and old man 'Lisha, who lived near the top of the pass. Through many a long spring day, when April showers were driving the wild cherry-blossoms in clouds on to the river-banks, have these two champions, when they ought to have been ploughing their corn-land, wrestled for the biggest 'string' of fish.

Trout, in these latitudes, cannot live away from the forest shade and the cool waters of the great mountain ranges. Before the war, with the exception of the mountaineers and a very rare farmer in the country immediately adjoining, scarcely a trout-fisherman could have been found in the whole of Virginia. The mountaineers themselves appreciated the superiority of trout-fishing over the kind of angling for coarse fish in vogue in the lowlands, and prided themselves vastly on the accomplishment. It was a momentous day indeed when the first fly was thrown on Rumbling Creek. So much so that I have thought it worthy to be recorded as an event in itself.

It is my firm and, I think, well-founded conviction that, in the year 187–, I assisted in the very first invasion of the mountains south of the Potomac ever undertaken with fly-rod and tackle. If we were not actually the first party

in the whole South to make such a venture, we were most certainly the first that struck what was known as the Windy Gap section of the Blue Ridge mountains. And what consternation and astonishment our advent created upon the now familiar waters of Rumbling Creek I propose to make the subject of a brief reminiscence. Our base of operations for this notable campaign was the town of Bunkerville, a place celebrated, I need not say, for the manufacture of tobacco ; and it was moreover the home of the three other sportsmen who, with myself, composed the party. We will call them (and this indeed without much departure from accuracy) the colonel, the doctor, and the judge. As Southerners, though keen sportsmen otherwise, they were as a matter of course at that time novices in the art of fly-fishing ; but the colonel and the judge, wonderful to relate, had recently paid a visit to Scotland, and there utilising their leisure in acquiring some practical insight into the noble science, had returned home great enthusiasts. They had transmitted their ardour to the untravelled doctor, and he had been duly entered, and carefully coached upon the barren surface of the colonel's mill-pond. Most people at so short a distance from the Blue Ridge, for it was little over forty miles from Bunkerville, were vaguely aware that there was a good store of trout hidden away somewhere among those great forest-covered peaks, that could be just seen on clear days like faint blue clouds above the horizon. But the colonel's great ambition was to inaugurate fly-fishing as a Virginia sport. He had brought a large assortment of tackle from Mrs. Hogg's once famous little repository in Edinburgh, and, as he was a man who did nothing by halves, had paid fifty dollars in New York for one of the then newly-invented split-cane rods. He talked trout all day on the main street to audiences who had never risen above a languid interest in chub and a float, and half the

night upon his porch to his family, who could not very well get away from him.

The train would take us about half-way to our destination. The remainder of the distance we were to drive in the colonel's spring-wagon, which his old coachman Caleb, with tent, provisions, and the rest of our baggage, was to take forward the previous day to the point where our route left the railway. Bunkerville was but a country town, and excitements were both scarce and mild. So it was almost a matter of course that its weekly organ should indulge in sundry jests at the expense of our venture. The colonel was recommended to take six-shooters instead of 'fishing-poles,' and he was congratulated, I remember, on his foresight in 'securing the services of the first medical man in the community,' which it was hinted he would be likely to need. But old Caleb, the colonel's coloured coachman and gardener, who had been included in the expedition as part of the establishment, took it much more seriously. The colonel had owned him before the war, and now it was jokingly said he owned the colonel; at any rate, he was one of the old and privileged sort. Now there was nothing a well-raised Southern negro despised and dreaded so much as rough wild scenery and rough low white men. Caleb did not fancy this job at all, and confided to me at some length his sentiments on the subject. He declared that there were more mean men upon those mountains than there were hairs upon his own head. It passed his understanding, moreover, that any civilised white men should deliberately precipitate themselves into a wilderness inhabited by savages and bears. He had heard, upon the very best authority, that the mouth of hell was situated in the neighbourhood of our proposed operations, and that every dark of the moon the devil himself, with live coals for eyes, rode astride of a big black bear along the summit

of the Windy Range. Fox-hunting and partridge-shooting Caleb accepted with approval as the sport of gentlemen, but these new-fangled ideas of the colonel about trout-fishing gave the old henchman the utmost concern, seeing the places and the company into which they would lead him. And all this, too, when the mill-pond at home was full of chub, and the colonel could sit on the bank, with his fishing-pole resting on a fork, and have his meals regular, and boys to bait his hook, and an iced julep whenever he felt in the humour for refreshment. No—Caleb could not understand it; and more particularly as he had to go himself, he condemned the whole business in most unqualified terms. If this is what came of Emancipation, he, for his part, would recall the days of slavery with the utmost pleasure; though, considering what a much greater personage Caleb had been before the war, the concession, it must be confessed, was not such a great one as it might at first sight appear. He finished the long speech, of which this is a summary in plain English, by displaying a single-barrelled pistol he had purchased that day for a dollar, 'jes ter skeer off the bars,' he said. And when two days later he met us at the station with the wagon and our equipment, and confided to the writer that he had it loaded in his coat-tail pocket, I could not help feeling that a terror much more real than the old negro's imaginings had been added to our journey.

We were not indeed launching ourselves upon the mountains entirely without an introduction. For it so happened that Pete, already mentioned, was an old sergeant of the colonel's ragged, but valiant, regiment. He could, as also noted, write a little, or, as he expressed it, 'scratch some,' and had sent word to his old commanding officer to come along whenever he felt like it. 'I 'll be mitey glad,' he wrote, 'tu teche you alls how tu

cotch trout.' He little thought what we were going to teach him.

So we drove for twenty miles through the rolling arable country, whose bright red soil showed off to perfection the rich greens of the growing crops and the fresh mantling woodlands. As we approached the mountains the fields turned grey, the homesteads grew humbler, and the red unmetalled roads changed to stony tracks, strewn with boulders and crossed continually by impetuous streams fresh from their mountain sources. Old Caleb, in a steady, half-audible monotone, cursed the country, as his horses, unused to rocks, slipped heavily on to the pole, or lunged forward on their collars with spasmodic and uneasy jerks. 'You an' me, Charley,' we heard him growl to his near horse, who had almost been on his nose, 'bin used ter travellin' on roads, not to crawlin' up the bed of a creek among wild Injuns.' By the time we reached the actual foot of the range, where the ex-sergeant's house, we had good reason for believing, was situated, the sun had sunk behind the great wall of mountains, which here towered above us to the height of nearly 4000 feet ; but against the crimson trail that it had left we could plainly see the outlines of the stunted pines and wind-swept chestnuts that crowned the topmost ridges. All below, however, was rapidly merging into a black chaos. Of the terrors which that vast void contained Caleb was no doubt thinking when his horses halted abruptly in their tracks, and the old man, calling out that there was a 'bar' in the road, begged us to take the reins while he extracted the pistol from the depths of his long coat-tails. It was not a bear, however, this time, but Pete Robison, who was remarkably like one. Cordial greetings passed between him and the colonel, and in due course we were conducted to his log-house upon the banks of Rumbling Creek, to which the reader has already been

introduced. Here, in the open patch beside the house, we unlimbered, lit our fire, pitched our tent, and with the invaluable help of the sergeant, made everything snug for the night. It was late before we had finished supper, and, sitting round the camp-fire smoking, began seriously to discuss operations with Pete. The latter was in high good humour, for, though better off than most mountaineers, he rarely tasted good wheat bread, sugar-cured ham, or Mocha coffee, and still more rarely all at one meal, with a glass of old Bourbon whisky afterwards. 'You 've brought a right smart chance of whisky along with you, I hope, cunnel?' said he.

'Two gallons,' said the colonel, pointing with his pipe-stem to a demijohn (not old Bourbon) within the circle of light. 'Why?'

'Them mount'n boys is apt to be a bit techy with strangers,' he answered, jerking his thumb up towards the dark masses above us.

And Pete then proceeded to explain that scarcely any strangers were ever seen upon the mountain, except a sheriff's posse hunting horse-thieves or whisky-stills, and that our presence, even as fishermen, might excite suspicions which he would find it necessary to allay. But he declared that his intervention would be greatly simplified if he had a good supply of whisky at his back. In any case, he proposed to cut us some fishing-poles the first thing in the morning.

The colonel's reply was to reach over for the bundle of rods that happened to be near him, and pass them to Pete.

'Well, I 'll be dorgonned,' said the electrified back-woodsman. 'Is thar a jinted pole in each o' them grey bags?'

'There is,' said the colonel.

Pete seemed overcome with an emotion too deep for words. He had only once handled one of these strange

weapons it appeared, and that was when he was away in the army. But many a time and often had he descanted upon that notable incident to his brother fishermen in the mountain. It was not, however, he declared, till he had thrown one or two scoffers into the creek, that they had consented to believe in his tale, and in the existence of such fabulous implements. And now, behold, on his own river, and right under his very nose, lay a whole bundle of them !

But Pete was to be much more astonished than this before the night was many minutes older. 'Cunnel,' said he, when he had recovered from this first shock, 'I reckon you 'll be lookin' for me to dig you some worms in the mornin'.'

'Worms be hanged,' said the colonel. Pete was perhaps a little surprised, possibly hurt, at the warmth of the colonel's tone, but, still unsuspecting, he replied that he *had* heard people used crayfish, maggots, and even paste in the low country, and suggested that we might have brought a supply with us.

It was a great moment this for the pioneer of the noble art of fly-fishing in Virginia, as he opened his fly-book by the light of the cedar-log fire, and displayed to the confused eyes of the champion fisherman of Windy Range the dainty treasures of Mrs. Hogg's repository.

Pete rubbed his eyes for a moment with the back of his hand in deep perplexity. 'Them hooks is a heap too small, cunnel, to carry a bait, and with all them feathers and truck on 'em too.'

'They ain't intended to carry a bait,' said the judge, striking in ; 'the feathers are the bait.'

'Good Lord ha' mussey, you ain't proposin' to cotch Rumblin' Crick trout on them ar fool things ? '

'Yes, we are, and a heap of 'em too,' said the colonel, with much dignity.

The mountaineer's face was in shadow and, unfortunately, I could not catch its expression after this astonishing announcement, but I heard a familiar click and the sound of a solid projectile hitting the side of the tent, and then rolling gently down its dewy surface. I knew it was a quid of tobacco, and understood the mingled feelings which prompted the discharge.

'Well, gentlemen,' said the sergeant, after a brief but significant interval of silence, 'I believe I 'll say good-night. I reckon I 'd better get them worms in the mornin', and see if I can't scare up some hooks.'

I should like to dwell for a moment on the splendour of the sunrise on these southern mountains, and endeavour, if only in some inadequate fashion, to recall the manner in which the golden glory, driving before it the dark shadows and the light vapours of early dawn, steals downwards over this vast sea of many-tinted dew-laden leaves. But space forbids, and Pete, true to his word, had come provided with a tin of worms, and some fearsome-looking hooks attached to a foot or so of coarse gut. We duly and properly expressed our gratitude, and declared that we would gladly fall back on his supplies if our own methods failed, but in the meantime we should try those first. 'Well, gentlemen, you alls is out on a frolic anyway (a frolic indeed !), and it ain't no business of mine ; but when you git tired flicken' them feather-hooks aroun' I reckon you 'll find the worms come in sorter handy.'

To say we had absolutely no qualms about the fly-taking inclinations of these trout would be untrue. But there was nothing whatever in the surrounding conditions here to keep them from following their natural instinct, and upon the whole we felt tolerably confident.

It was probably eight o'clock in the morning before we got to work, and long before that hour news had sped up

the mountain that there was 'a parcel of low country folks camped down below and fixed up for fishing.' Natural curiosity, and an instinct for whisky, soon provided us with an audience; and while we were yet completing our preparations, half a dozen woodlanders had solemnly ranged themselves before us, and with lack-lustre eyes, and jaws working mechanically on the inevitable quid, were with great deliberation trying to take in the situation. Three of them had fishing-poles (hickory saplings), fifteen feet long at least, over their shoulders; another carried a long brass-mounted Kentucky rifle. Pete now presented us to them in due form. He explained that we were not a sheriff's posse, nor were we surveyors come to inspect their ever precarious titles, nor were we cattle-men, or anything else unpleasant, but merely harmless individuals from Bunkerville out on a frolic with a demijohn of whisky, and 'a sorter notion of tryin' the trout.' To this low level did Pete's eloquence reduce us, and at the word *trout* he gave such a prodigious wink at his friends that it could have been seen half-way up the mountain. Three of the natives had smooth yellow faces, with receding chins, and sloping shoulders, the other two were short and squat, like Pete, and apparently covered with hair. They wore coarse cotton shirts and homespun trousers tucked into long boots, one or two of them, however, being bare-footed. But I knew them all well later on.

The whisky was brought out, and having shaken our hands all round in flabby and fish-like fashion, they declared they were mighty glad to see us, which at the moment was beyond a doubt sincere. They also remarked that there were plenty of trout in the creek, adding significantly 'for them as knowed how to cotch 'em.' Old Caleb in the meantime was moving fussily about, with much parade of anxiety, and with a most solemn face, picking up stray articles, and

putting them ostentatiously into his wagon. The drift of his movements became apparent when he touched my elbow in passing and remarked: 'Yo' keep yo' eyes, suh, set plum on them thar men. Them kind 'll steal the teeth out'n yo' head befo' you knows whar you is.'

Pete now brought out our rods for general admiration, which was freely accorded by our new friends; but that feeling was soon sunk in an amused contempt for our ridiculous 'featherhooks.' Though much the youngest in years of the party, I was a veteran compared to the rest in the matter of fly-fishing, and endeavoured to explain that I had myself in England killed thousands of trout in this fashion. 'England, O Lordy!' said one of the squat men. 'Why, that 's the country whar there 's a king as takes a tenth of all you raise, ain't it?' The name seemed to stir a chord, too, in the memory of one of his attenuated companions, who, rubbing his forehead as if to quicken thought, drawled out: 'That thar 's the place grandma useter run on 'bout so, away out yonder t'other side of everythin', ain't it? Her folks come from out thar, when she was a bit of chap.[1]'

'Well,' interrupted the judge, 'it 's where all our folks came from some time or other, that 's as sure as shooting. So come, let 's get to work.'

But the colonel had yet another surprise in store for the mountain. As we have said, he was a man who did nothing by halves, and, while in the old country, had not failed to provide himself with waders and brogues. In these he now appeared, and fairly paralysed the rude audience. It was a great sight to see him thus attired, with a new basket hung on his back, a landing-net in one hand and his gorgeous rod in the other, descend into the pellucid shallows of Rumbling Creek. Such a spectacle could never have been conceived even by the wildest imagination on the mountain.

[1] Vernacular for *child*.

But the colonel, honest man, looked proudly conscious of the solemnity of the occasion, and maintained a dignity befitting the inauguration of a great sport. As he waded into the streamy tail of a most beautiful pool, one could almost fancy him consecrating the waters, before proceeding to open this new epoch in the history of southern angling.

The mountaineers stood in a row upon the bank, with eyes and mouths wide open in amazement at such a spectacle, Pete with his baits in reserve at their head.

The colonel was not a great expert, but he was quite good enough for the trout of Rumbling Creek, that had never seen an artificial fly in their lives, and there was moreover a breeze behind him. As he let out his line and made the usual preliminary casts, there was an audible stir among the spectators. The first two or three serious throws up the pool provoked some stifled merriment; but at the next—heaven and earth!—up went the point of the colonel's rod and a six-ounce fish, fast on his tail-fly, leaped a foot into the air. Never shall I forget the excitement among those lethargic mountaineers. They fairly danced upon the shore. 'Heist him out, cunnel!' they yelled. 'Fling him on the bank, or he 's a gonner, sho'.'

But the colonel did nothing of the kind at this supreme moment. With rod at the perpendicular, in the most approved manner, acquired in his brief visit to Scotland, and his spare hand on the reel, he proceeded with the most admirable presence of mind to wind up the game little fish, and in the most collected manner possible to humour its struggles, and finally to bring it head up into his landing-net. In less than a minute he had another fish on, and successfully repeated the same operation, the mountaineers in the meantime keeping up a chorus of ejaculations not found in Webster.

When the pool had been thoroughly fished, the great

pioneer waded leisurely to the bank and, taking off his hat, began to wipe from his forehead the signs of that emotion which he had so admirably in other ways suppressed, and thus delivered himself to the amazed mountaineers: 'There, gentlemen, that is the way to catch trout. I hope to see the day when not a bait or a worm will be dropped into this beautiful stream on whose banks you have the good fortune to live.' As the judge said, the colonel looked as if he had just been elected President of the United States. If the thrill of the performances of which this was the inauguration did not shake the United States, it shook these mountains from end to end. Men who had believed themselves the only trout-fishers in the world were knocked flat upon their back, so to speak, by strangers whose apparent greenness in the art had provided for the mountain a brief moment of unqualified delight.

Exactly how many dozen trout we took on that day, and on the two next, is of no consequence. In spite of the brushy nature of the stream, to which I was, of course, accustomed, the colonel, though so recent a convert, proved a most efficient one. The judge contributed his more modest quota, and the doctor, after spending two days, as he declared, in climbing trees, was quite rewarded on the third and last by half a dozen fish.

The news sped up the valley like wildfire, that there were strange fishermen below, and that 'one big man in gum pants was trompin' up the middle o' the crick with a dip net, flickin' a silver pole about like a buggy whip, and rakin' out the fish like ole Scrat.' Many a mountaineer that day left his corn-row unhoed and his tobacco-hills half-finished upon distant heights. And as we pushed our way up-stream through avenues of forest trees, and groves of cedar, and blazing banks of rhododendrons, some gaunt son of the mountain was always hovering near by in a state of

curiosity almost too great for his slow speech and limited vocabulary.

Our camp-fire on the second night presented a very animated scene. Caleb had piled a wagon-load of wood on the fire, and the flames leaped high heavenwards. Conciliation being so vital a point, we had brought half a sack of flour and a bag of coffee, and nearly a dozen mountaineers assisted at the greatest 'trout-fry,' as Pete said, that had ever been known in the mountains. The theme of conversation as they sat round and smoked their corn-cob pipes well into the night can be easily imagined, and after two or three orbits of the whisky, the stories of trout and bear that went around would have made the post-prandial performances of the ordinary British fisherman seem tame in comparison.

We parted on the fourth morning upon most friendly terms with the whole mountain, and they were profoundly grateful for a souvenir of a couple of dozen 'featherhooks,' or 'fancy bugs,' which all disappeared in a single day, so Pete told me afterwards, in tree-tops and snags.

As with our third day's catch carefully packed for sceptical friends in Bunkerville, old Caleb once more got his team off the rocky mountain roads on to the old red highways, he gave a great sigh of relief. 'Praise de Lord,' I heard him say, 'I 'm done wid it fur dis year anyway.' He little knew what was going to happen the next year; and how much truer his estimate of the mountain-men fortuitously proved than that of his master.

It now only remains to narrate as briefly as possible what actually did happen on this next occasion, when the colonel, the doctor, the judge, and Caleb, the first three being full of pleasing anticipations, ventured on their second expedition to Rumbling Creek. It was an episode, too, that created so much excitement, and gave rise to so much

misplaced mirth, at the expense of the adventurers, I had myself much cause for satisfaction that circumstances had prevented my making one of them. The only person, indeed, who came well out of the affair was Caleb, who, it will be remembered, held views with regard to the mountaineers that nothing could shake. He had already been too much given to regarding himself as the fountain of all wisdom and the embodiment of all sagacity, but after this second campaign he became so intolerably puffed out with self-satisfaction that it almost caused a total breach between the man and his master. That the whole trouble, too, arose from an irresponsible newspaper paragraph made the fiasco all the more grievous to those concerned.

Now it so happened that this next spring my own plans would not fit in with those of the colonel's party. Moreover, I lived in another county, and approached this particular part of the Blue Ridge Mountains from an entirely different direction. I decided therefore to go alone, early in May, and, abjuring tents, wagons, and other encumbrances, to travel on horseback the whole way, and take my chance of such hospitality as Pete's log-house at the forks of the creek afforded. It was a bright May morning when, bound once more for Rumbling Creek, I mounted my horse, with no encumbrances but a pair of well-filled saddle-bags and a fishing-rod, and it was nearly dark before the fifty-mile ride was accomplished that brought me to Pete's door. Nothing, however, need be said about my own visit, except that it was uneventful and successful, Pete's accommodation sufficient for the circumstances, and the mountaineers entirely friendly. But upon the third and last evening of my stay, on returning to the cabin, I found Pete, with a newspaper in his hand, surrounded by mountaineers. My host was then the only man on the mountain who could read, and he now had on his horn-rimmed spectacles, look-

ing both solemn and important. The other men dropped away shortly in rather unexpected fashion. There was no banjo playing nor fish stories that night. But as we were busy after supper cleaning and slightly salting the last catch of fish for transportation home the next day through a hot sun, I took very little notice of the incident. Before bedtime, however, Pete called my attention to the paper he had been reading. It was the *Bunkerville Sentinel*, and had been forwarded to one of the mountaineers with a paragraph marked, and the deciphering of the paragraph had been, of course, entrusted to Pete. 'These boys,' said he, 'are mightily put out at a piece that's sot down on that thar paper; I told 'em it was all foolishness, and thote I'd cam'd em down some, but they's right techy.' The paragraph ran thus:—'Our esteemed fellow-townsman, Colonel D——, was so delighted with his fishing experiences last year on Rumbling Creek, he is reported to have made arrangements with the State Fish Commissioner and the actual owners (who live in Richmond) of the large but profitless mountain tract through which these waters run, to reserve both the north and south forks of the Creek. These are to be kept, it is said, as a nursery for stocking depleted or barren streams in other parts of the State, and the colonel is to be granted the sole right of catching trout therein. The colonel, we all know, was a gallant and brave Confederate officer. But we should have thought he had had, like the rest of us, enough of fighting, and we are really surprised to find the veteran once more upon the war-path.' Part of this was evidently due to some suggestions that were in the air for making experiments in stocking accessible streams; the rest was, of course, more or less of a joke. I don't suppose the colonel thought twice about it. I am quite sure I did not, and rode home the next day. 'Yes,' said Pete, as I shook his hand at parting in the

morning, 'I wish them mount'n boys hadn't seen that thar all-fired newspaper foolishness. They'se mighty ignorant and powerful techy, and if they take a notion inter their heads no crowbar won't drive it out.'

It was some two or three weeks after this that, on opening the *Bunkerville Sentinel*, which circulated through the adjoining counties, I found myself confronted by several flaming headlines. '*Brutal assault on peaceful anglers. Party from Bunkerville savagely chased out of the Windy range. The colonel says he has had enough of trout-fishing, but refuses to say more. The judge goes back on Isaak Walton, and gives it as his deliberate opinion that trout-fishing is not the recreation for a contemplative man—not on Rumbling Creek anyway.*'

'*The doctor declines to commit himself, but he has intimated to his friends that he proposes in future to confine himself entirely to the homely chub and cat-fish of civilisation.*'

'*Uncle Caleb is to-day the biggest man in Bunkerville, and talks of nothing else but his trout-hunt. He says he told his master all along that it warn't safe for no gen'l'mens to go among them white trash in the mount'ns.*'

The story, as I have remarked, went all through Virginia, and even got into the Philadelphia and New York papers, as fresh evidence of the barbarism of the Southern mountaineers. It appears that in driving up as in the preceding year to Pete's house, my former companions noticed a certain depression in that great man's manner, which he accounted for by saying he was 'pestered by a jaw ache.' This, of course, I heard afterwards. But they had intended in any case to drive a little way up the stream, and camp in an open spot that had been marked down the previous year. This they proceeded to do, and pitched their tent on a strip of turf, lying between the river and a steep wooded slope. The fire was lit, supper cooked, and the big demijohn

of whisky set out ready for the expected company. But, with the exception of Pete, who seemed anxious and mysterious, none came. Nothing suspecting, however, the three fishermen rolled themselves in their blankets, and Caleb, as before, retired to his wagon, to his gloomy anticipations, and his single-barelled pistol.

As Caleb was the first of the party I happened to meet after the adventure, running across the old man on the train one day, I may as well, in as brief a form as possible, give the full and true account of the matter as he gave it to me.

'Well, suh,' said Caleb, 'it mout have bin twelve, and then agin it mout have bin one o'clock, and the gen'l'mens was asleep in de tent and snorin' right good too. I was sorter wakesome myself. What with the fuss the crick raised on the rocks, and what with listenin' fur bars, and the lonesomeness of the location, I couldn't git no sleep. All at onst, I thote I heerd a trompin' and stirrin' roun' way up on de mount'n above my hade. Well, suh, befo' I knowed anythin' mo', a whole pile of rocks came leapin' and tarin' down the hill, crashin' agin the trees, some on 'em, and others pitchin' down on ter the grass-lot by the tent, and hummin' on par'se de wagon tur'ble. Two of 'em hit de wagon spang bang, and at the same time I let out a holler that fotched the cunnel, the doctor, and the judge skippin' out'n the tent in the biggest sorter hurry. The doctor, who was the hindermost, wern't hardly clear of the ropes, when a rock as big as my hade lit plum on de tent, went spang through it and bust the tree of the saddle which he 'd bin usin' for a piller. I dun seen this arterwards, an its de solemn troof fur sho'. Well, suh, the rocks cum pilin' down on ter that grass lot tremenjous. The gen'l'mens couldn't see good fur to dodge 'em, and got right smartly bruised, till they crep right in under the ridge of the crick bank.

'I lep' up den in de wagon an' fired my pistol right at de mount'n, an' ther was the biggest yellin' you ever hern from up dar in the sky-line, an' three or fo' rifles went off, makin' streaks of fire up agin the dark wood. I jes heard Mar'se Robert shout: "Damn you, fool nigger!" when I hollered out I was shot, an' rolled over in de wagon, an' laid thar studyin' on de day of judgment, an' thinkin' to myself, "Dis yer 's trout-fishin', is it? It look to me a heap mo' like de war come back." Presently I begun to think it wur a bit o' rock, not a bullet, that had struck the side o' my hade; an' I felt mighty thankful it hadn't fotched me on a wuss part.

'Presently the rumpus guv over, an' the gen'l'mens crep' out from under de bank. The doctor had got his arm mighty nigh broke, an' the jedge was bleedin' from the face, and had been mashed by a rock on de shoulder. The ole cunnel he hadn't bin teched nuthin' to speak of, an' he begun shout'n an' cuss'n he'd clean out them mount'ns, if he had to bring out the whole state melesha. I b'lieve ef the doctor an' the jedge hadn't bin crippled, the cunnel would have charged up that thar mount'n wid his fishin'-pole, as we hern the survidges whoopin' an' hollerin' an' darin' us to come up.

'"But," says I to myself, "the very fust thing we 've got ter do is to git from yer." Praise de Lord, too, de horses was hitched clar out'n the track o' them rocks. An' while the cunnel was holp'n the two other gen'l'mens, I jes lit out quietly, without sayin' nuthin', an' had de whole tent an' truck flung in de wagon, an' de horses hitched up in de wust hurry you ever seen.

'Mar'se Robert, I b'lieve, was layin' out to wait till sun-up and fight de mount'n himself. But I said: "Look yer, Mar'se Robert, you an' me got other folks ter study. We kin come back an' attend to this fightin' business afterwards;

but them two gen'l'mens ain't fit to lie out in dese yer bushes no mo'." The cunnel sorter quited down then, an' we holped the doctor an' the jedge inter the wagon. Mar'se Robert he was 'bleeged to climb in afterwards. An' I tell you, suh, when I got de lines in my han's, an' de moon shinin' good, too, I didn't wait fur de word go ; an' by sun-up we was ten miles from de foot of them blamed mount'ns. The doctor was sufferin' mightily, an' the jedge was powerful stiff an' bruised. But the cunnel was snortin' an' runnin' on turr'ble. He ain't a swarin' man, as you know, but, bless grashus ! he did let out, as we went bumpin' home over them rocks.

' When, jes' arter sun-up, we struck the big dirt pike once mo', I laid out to speak a piece o' my mind to him. " Mar'se Robert," says I, " you rec'llect I dun warned you——" I didn't get no fudder. The cunnel hollered out he 'd pitch me clar over the fence ef I dun opened my mouf agin. Lordy, he wur powerful mad. He know'd thar'd be the biggest laff all over de county when dis yer frolic cum out, as thar pintedly was. Some even o' dese yer Yankee papers, I hern tell, got pieces in 'bout it.'

And so they had, as I have already mentioned. The adventure was a nine-days' wonder. Nothing could be done in the way of punishing the culprits, for there was no evidence as to their identity. But it confirmed the general impression of those days, that the mountaineers were dangerous, as well as barbarous. Those, however, who knew something about them took a rather different view, and the truth gradually came out. The newspaper paragraph I had seen them so perturbed over earlier in the season gave the clue to the whole matter. It seems that from this they had contracted a notion that their streams were to be forcibly closed to them by some vague, newfangled piece of legislation, with which the colonel's name

had been so unhappily coupled. And it was evident that Pete, with his metaphorical crowbar, had been unable to eject it from their heads. An illiterate, savage, clannish race, who were always half conscious of smarting under a social ban, they not unnaturally resisted, in their own wild way, this supposed attempt upon their liberties, looking upon it as an intolerable infringement of their most cherished rights. It was only a mere handful of us, however, who were interested in the practical side of the question, and to our ears there soon came rumours that these wild men had not only found out their mistake but were actually ashamed of themselves.

Pete, it appears, had known nothing definite of their intentions. Being a sort of link between the mountain and civilisation, and, moreover, a leader who was quite sure to oppose disorder, as well as being a friend of the colonel's, these hostile intentions had been kept back from him. He had only vague ideas that resentment was in the air. And being, after all, himself a mountaineer born and bred, he could not afford to see further than he was intended to among his own people. The next spring, however, he sent word to me that I could come up and fish the whole of both forks, and he would guarantee that not a soul would pester me or any of my friends. How I acted on his advice, and revisited his humble abode, not only the next, but for many seasons afterwards, has been already indicated.

But nothing would ever induce the judge or the doctor to go trout-fishing in those mountains again. As for the colonel, I have reason to think that old man Caleb in the end proved too much for him. Fortunately, however, just at this time, the larger rivers, which had been stocked with black bass, began to show great sport with the fly.

These were not dominated by mountaineers, but could be comfortably worked from hotels and such like resorts,

so Caleb could raise no possible objection. It is probable that some compromise was arrived at, for the colonel took vigorously to bass-fishing, and Caleb always accompanied him. Indeed, he frequently, so I was told, took a hand himself, and could be seen watching his cork float from under the shade of a willow or sycamore, while his master, with the same 'gum pants' and 'silver pole' and 'dip net' that had so astonished the bloodthirsty mountaineers of the Windy Gap, waded out into the broad, streamy shallows, and with 'fancy bugs' of weird proportions performed miracles upon the then somewhat unsophisticated black bass of the Greenbriar and the Upper James.

CHAPTER XII

MAR'SE DAB AFTER THE WAR

Dabney Carter Digges came out of the war as he went into it, a captain, a title given him on formal occasions. But by nearly the whole of the negro population, in spite of the tendency after the war to drop old *ante-bellum* terms that denoted servitude, he was still, for some reason or other, universally spoken of, and to, as Mar'se Dab. This was partly, no doubt, an unconscious tribute to the local fame of his family, as if, perhaps, it were due to these latter not to snap the old ties quite so abruptly as in ordinary cases, and partly, no doubt, to accident. Nor, indeed, was this a unique survival of old habits; it was merely rather an exceptional one. So I think the reason that made those of us who were the captain's immediate friends and neighbours speak of him generally, and in frivolous moments to him, as 'Mar'se Dab,' must be sought for in the humorous contrast between the great man's impressive suggestion of immaturity in this particular sobriquet. At any rate, it is as 'Mar'se Dab' that my old friend comes most readily to my recollection, and it seems natural to recall his peculiarities, with the familiar designation upon the title-page. With regard to the subject of this sketch, I have so far used and shall continue to use the past tense. I have no reason to suppose that Mar'se Dab is dead. Far from it. But because the industrial system he pursued with such vigour proved so much less profitable than picturesque, he is now,

I regret to say, an exile from his native land. The old acres, fortunately for them, I fear it must be added, know him no more.

Mar'se Dab, in short, 'burst all to pieces' many years ago, as his neighbours, with that kindly interest people take in their friends' futures, used always to prophesy that he would. Not even a fragment from this aforesaid explosion remained wherewith to start him in a new land-killing enterprise. So he, poor man, scarcely past the prime of life, had to accept an offer from his wife's brother, who kept a store far away in Western Kansas. The captain was not, I think, a proud man. He had not so much pride in matters of this kind as most of his class. But what he had he was compelled to swallow, when circumstances forced him behind the counter of a western country store. For those who had known Mar'se Dab on his ancestral soil, it required a mental effort of no ordinary kind to imagine him tying up packets of sugar and coffee for Teutonic or Scandinavian homesteaders. Indeed, it is distressing even to think of the captain in such a place or at such an occupation.

To attempt a Virginia sketch without at least a genealogical allusion would be almost impossible. It was an instinctive feeling that this had to come which, I think, prompted me to open this chapter with the captain's full baptismal name. For, to the English ear, neither the names of Dabney, nor of Carter, nor of Digges have any particular significance. Distinguished individuals may possibly have borne them, but the names themselves are by no means distinguished. In Virginia, however, it is otherwise; for they are all three written large upon the pages of her past. There are, no doubt, persons in Virginia possessing one or other of these names who have no connection whatever with the old colonial families who have given to them their local lustre. The captain, however, was a representative

in his own person of these three illustrious houses, respectively. For his mother was a Carter of Birley, and his grandmother had been a Dabney from the shores of the Rappahannoc, while as for the Diggeses, are they not written in the chronicles of Berkeley county from generation to generation ?

Mar'se Dab himself, however, never appeared to take much stock in the genealogical advantages he enjoyed. In many respects, indeed—more particularly in the superficialities of life—he by no means did credit to his progenitors. It used to be a common matter of criticism in the more aristocratic circles of Berkeley county—among the ladies particularly—that 'Cousin Dab was a mighty rough man for his raising.' But then, as these fair critics would go on to remark, it was not so much to be wondered, seeing of what 'very ordinary stock' his wife came. Now, as I have said, the Dabneys, the Carters, and the Diggeses were among the very first families in the state. If all their members were not educated and polished men, they ought to have been. But the Thackers, from whose family the captain took his wife, neither were, nor ever had been, people of education and polish. They owned plenty of land, and before the war had acquired almost as many negroes as the Diggeses themselves. Nevertheless they were upon quite another social plane.

The Thackers, in short, belonged to that very numerous class which came between the real gentry of the south and the poor non-slaveholding whites. Politically a part of the great compact 'slavocracy,' and numerically its greater part, but socially, and for most obvious reasons, inferior. Not a harshly defined inferiority, it is true ; that would never have done among people whose somewhat precarious interests were identical, and who were all members of a dominant political caste, with most of the world against

them. But the division was the unavoidable one between people with the habits and ideas of gentlefolk, and those whose existence was quite devoid of such refinements, who were, in short, at the best, intelligent farmers, and nothing more. These things were managed very well. The Diggeses and the Thackers had been accustomed to interchange calls regularly every year. The phraseology of the most perfect equality had always been maintained when they met, but there the fiction ended. Human nature could do no more, as I am sure you would have said if you had paid a visit first to the old Diggeses' homestead, and then gone on to the family mansion of the Thackers; and the Diggeses and the Thackers were only types, and very good ones, of what, to apply English terms, we may call the gentry and the yeomanry of the South.

So when the war was over—though old prejudices and social barriers were a good deal shaken—Mar'se Dab was looked upon as having rather let himself down when he married Amanda Thacker. Southern rural society, however, though by no means destroyed in that district, was greatly shattered. People were too poor and too busy, and too sore with the outside world, to be very ill-natured about such trifles. Still social traditions that are founded upon common sense and natural forces cannot be destroyed in a moment. So, as I have already remarked, the ladies of Berkeley county used to say in after years that it was not altogether to be wondered at that 'Cousin Dab had got so rough.'

Mar'se Dab's social position is then, I think, sufficiently well depicted. I once heard him airily described, by a jocose Canadian who was staying in the neighbourhood, as 'a dilapidated blood.' The captain's friends rather resented the phrase; but when he heard it himself some time afterwards, he laughed so loud that you could have heard him

all over the plantation, and so long that his wife got anxious about him,—Uncle Reuben, however, who was standing by at the time, reassured her by remarking, 'That 's 'zactly how Mar'se Dab useter laff befo' de wah.'

When I first knew the captain he might have been five-and-forty. His vocal capacity was in keeping with his powerful frame. He did more shouting and shouted louder on his plantation than any man I ever heard of, standing about on hilltops and sending his orders echoing far and wide to his numerous and widely scattered dependants. The negroes on the place used to declare that 'Mar'se Dab could go in two hollers to Shucksville.' Now Shucksville was the county town, and as it was thirteen miles off, this remark must, of course, be regarded as an Ethiopian illustration of a purely allegorical nature.

Mar'se Dab's military title was no bogus one, such as Captain Topfodder's, for instance, who kept the store at Digges's Mills, and took his rank from a freight barge he had skilfully navigated for many years on the James River Canal. On the contrary, the fact that it was not more important may be attributed to the captain's own reckless gallantry. If valour alone—and of course I allude to the Civil War—could have regulated rank, our friend should by rights have been a general of division at the very least. For it was always said—said, that is to say, in Berkeley county—that Dab Digges was the bravest soldier in the whole Southern army. His valour, however, was of such a hopelessly impetuous kind, and his contempt of discipline so profound, that even the command of a regiment would have been out of the question. So as a captain he started in the 20th Virginia Cavalry; and a captain he remained till the second year of the war, when he was taken prisoner. Those of his brother officers who survived the struggle used to say it was extraordinary that Cousin Dab (for the regi-

ment was raised in Berkeley, and most of the officers were his relations) succeeded in escaping death or captivity, or even a wound, so long. 'There was no man in the war,' they said, 'that tried so hard to get killed; or,' as they sometimes added in the strictest confidence, 'got his men so often into tight places.'

I gathered that it was upon the whole considered by no means a calamity when Mar'se Dab was harmlessly removed in the second year of the war. The climax came about in this wise. It was in one of the great battles of that year, I forget which, that the 20th Virginia Cavalry were ordered to charge a regiment of Massachusetts infantry. It was a misty day, and it was not until the horsemen were within a couple of hundred yards of the enemy that an overwhelming body of cavalry was discovered to be drawn up in their rear. At any rate the retreat was sounded, and the 20th Virginia wheeled about. Not so, however, Mar'se Dab! That big voice which the negroes declared would go in two halloes to Shucksville, was heard sounding through the fog and smoke that its owner would be d——d if he 'd retreat. And that was the last that was seen of Mar'se Dab for two years.

From evidence that filtered out afterwards, it appeared that the Yankee infantry were amazed upon that day to receive the charge of a solitary horseman, who came down upon them out of the fog, from whence they never rightly knew. They supposed it to be a runaway horse till it got so close they could see that the rider was spurring for all he was worth and shouting like a madman, as they then took him to be. Not a rifle was raised, but when Mar'se Dab arrived among the enemy's ranks, so far from appreciating the forbearance, he laid about him with such zest that if his sword had had an edge on it, several people would have been badly hurt. As it was, he was knocked off his horse

with the butt-end of a musket, and sent to a Federal prison on Lake Erie.

Here Mar'se Dab chafed for nearly two years, picking up various and useful accomplishments hardly worthy, perhaps, of a Digges. Among these he learnt how to bake bread, to cut hair, and to pull teeth—studies forced upon him partly by the ennui of his position, and partly by the necessities for making a little money out of his fellow-prisoners, with which to procure those cakes of chewing-tobacco which were the solace of his life. Again and again, in the piping times of peace, has Mar'se Dab joked to me of these accomplishments. Two of them, at any rate, he carried with him into private life, and practised (in a friendly way, of course) during his few spare moments, with an enthusiasm that I am afraid somewhat victimised his neighbours. As for hair-cutting, it was at least a harmless if a somewhat singular hobby. The captain was indeed in great request in the neighbourhood as a trimmer of locks. As a puller of teeth, Mar'se Dab's popularity was nothing like so great. He used an old-fashioned key, and for the rest trusted only to his herculean strength ; so the halting attitude of the neighbourhood towards him on the tooth question may be partially understood. There were some people of an economical turn of mind who were tempted to call in once the gratuitous services of the captain. But I never heard that the most desperate sufferer from toothache or the most penurious individual ever repeated the experiment. Living near, as I did, I have heard sounds occasionally proceeding from Clover Hill that the negroes used to declare was Mar'se Dab at work upon some confiding countryman's jaw.

I was only once, however, a witness to one of these operations. If, as the negroes said, Mar'se Dab 'could go to Shucksville in two hollers,' I am prepared to swear his

patient upon that occasion would have reached the local metropolis in one.

When I first knew the captain he had just come to live at Clover Hill. This was not actually at the close of the war, but it was at the close of those few years of chaos—political, social, and financial—which ensued in war-worn Virginia after the surrender of Lee and abolition of slavery. It was the period which marked the first conflict of new conditions with old ideas—that reluctant struggle of an old civilisation based on a kindly picturesque domestic slavery, to adapt itself to an altered state of affairs ; a change from the obligation for food, clothing, lodging, and protection, to a business compact between master and servant, terminable at any moment.

Clover Hill was an average Virginia homestead of the better class. It had no pretension, of course, to compare to ' Newtown,' the old Digges place at the other end of the county, where the captain's eldest brother still lived at that time. There, indeed, at Newtown were several heirlooms and old sideboards, and antediluvian bedsteads, and a good deal of old silver, and family portraits that, whatever their defects may have been as works of art, represented at any rate ladies and gentlemen. Newtown was quite a famous place in Virginia ; but Clover Hill was nothing of the kind. For that reason, perhaps, it was all the more typical. Till the captain took possession, it had been occupied only by an overseer. Seed-wheat had been stored in the parlour. The best bedchamber had been for years devoted to the storage of dried apples and washed wool, and the walls were coated thick with entomological specimens that had danced in the sunny rays of a half-score of departed summers.

With the Digges advent this was, of course, all changed. But the house was furnished distinctly upon Thacker and not upon Digges lines. As Amanda Digges was an only

daughter of old man Hiram Thacker, she had inherited his household gods. Among these, too, there were family portraits of a kind—daguerreotypes and black paper silhouettes framed in fir-cones or varnished oak-leaves, caricaturing the last generation of Thackers in merciless if unconscious fashion.

The house at Clover Hill, though not so venerable nor so large as Newtown, had been built nevertheless as a gentleman's residence in the early part of the century. The captain's great-uncle, Randolph Digges, somewhat prominent in his day as a Whig politician, had been its founder and its occupant for a great number of years. The instalment of Amanda Thacker and her household gods at Clover Hill was an improvement on the overseer interregnum. Still, it did very little, I am afraid, to restore to Clover Hill the aristocratic tone that was said by old people to have marked it when that venerable patriarch 'Uncle Ran' over his madeira used to make its walls echo to postprandial denunciations of Jefferson, infidels, and Frenchmen. The building was of red brick; it was two stories high and perfectly square. A wide corridor ran straight through it below, and another with the same direct simplicity pierced it above. Upon the ground floor there were three rooms upon each side of the corridor, all exactly the same size and exactly alike. Upon the upper floor, too, there were three rooms upon each side of the corridor, also all of the same size and exactly alike.

It has never been rightly decided which was the back and which the front of the Clover Hill house, for at either end of the corridor there were big porticoes, supported by the same number of high, white, fluted columns, and approached by the same number of half-decayed wooden steps. The upstair corridor led through doors on to the roofs of these porticoes, from whence, under the overarching leaves of

aged oaks, could be seen glorious views of woodlands, fields, and distant mountains. In Uncle Ran's time, you may be sure, no such things would have happened; but in the utilitarianism of Thacker tradition it was no uncommon thing, after washing-day, to see the family linen hanging in graceful festoons over the railings, and fluttering in the wanton wind.

The doors and the windows of the Clover Hill mansion may possibly at one time have fitted tolerably, though even in an old Virginia house of the most approved kind such a condition would have been hardly orthodox. Now, however, they had sprung at their lintels, and gaped at their hinges to such an extent that Mar'se Dab used to swear that the house was not merely not weather-proof, 'but it warn't hardly dog-proof.'

From the early spring to the late fall of the year, however, there were few more charming spots in all Virginia than Clover Hill. Mar'se Dab could then boast with justice 'ther was ar stirrin' thar' (for he had dropped hopelessly, I am sorry to say, into the vernacular), 'when the heat elsewhere was enough to kill a mule.'

To nature's charms, however, I fear Mar'se Dab was almost insensible. He was not devoid of sentiment of a kind. Indeed it was partly that, I think, which made him so reactionary. But it was of the kind that hugged insensibly all time-honoured Virginia rural customs, and made him cling obstinately to old-fashioned ways, to be happy among big gangs of negroes, to love the very sight of a tobacco-field, to put up almost cheerfully with roads bottomless for mud, with gates that would not swing, with barns through which the rain-storms soaked, with houses through which the winter winds blew.

When the captain took up his abode at Clover Hill, the land was in very fair condition. The overseer, who had had

it in charge so long for the Digges family, had been a skilful and thrifty farmer. Being too old to be drafted for the army, he had remained at home all through the war. The estate had never been too heavily stocked with negroes, and had been seeded largely to grass and clover, the very acme of high farming in the South of those days.

When slavery and capital together were swept away by the war, and the conditions of Southern life practically revolutionised, most sensible men recognised that a different system must be pursued. Numbers of the better class flinched from the prospect, and went into business. Others set to work with good resolutions, and kept them. Many, again, made the resolutions, but did not keep them. Mar'se Dab, however, when he came to Clover Hill after the war, not only showed no inclination whatever towards agricultural reform, but he did not even make any profession of such intentions. He did even more than this. He openly and emphatically repudiated any such course, and declared that the style of farming that had been good enough for his fathers was good enough for him. He was too old, he said, to start raising clover and grass, when he 'd been all his life trying to kill it in the corn rows. So Mar'se Dab 'went into terbaccer.' He collected double as many free negroes on the place, both renters and hired hands, as there had been slaves before the war, and commenced that enlightened course which finally reduced Clover Hill from tolerable fertility to absolute sterility.

Mar'se Dab, too, was more fortunate than many of his neighbours; for when he married, he got with his wife five thousand dollars of hard money, which, in old man Thacker's thrifty hands, had somehow or other survived the general wreck of war.

Clover Hill was a picturesque property, undulating enough to give diversity to the landscape, without too great

abruptness for cultivation. The prevailing colour of the soil was red, which gives such a warm look to fallowed hillsides when contrasted with the green of woodlands and growing crops. Of meadowland there was plenty in former days—snug flats of rich alluvial soil between the hills, whose fertility was sufficient to resist, without deterioration, the average treatment of the old Virginia ' rip and tear ' system, which was saying much. In the overseer's time, and probably in the time, too, of old Uncle Ran, waving timothy grass and rank clover had flourished there and glistened in the heavy dews of the bright June mornings. When I first knew the place the backs of the negroes in hay-time used to bend low, and the perspiration pour from their ebony faces as they swished their mowing blades through the heavy growth. Little tinkling streams all overgrown with alders and grape-vines, coursed their way down the valleys ; and very troublesome they grew in flood-times if treated, as Mar'se Dab used to treat them, with contemptuous neglect.

At the far end of the place where Buffalo Creek, which bounded it on one side, crossed the highroad to Shucksville, which bounded it on the other, there stood a venerable wooden edifice which, together with the hamlet attached, was known as Digges' Mills. Here the corn and wheat of the neighbourhood had been ground ever since there had been any to grind, which was a good long time. From an old-world standpoint, perhaps, it was not very ancient, but at any rate it looked it. While the hum and drone of the wheel and the flashing of the waters over its black and sodden timbers, and the spray that sparkled on the mossy rocks beneath, and the rustic bridge of chestnut trunks that crossed the stream, and the huge weeping-willow from which it hung, made a picture that on sunny summer days it was both cool and pleasant to behold. Besides the mill there was a store, where Mar'se Dab had, in his earlier

prosperous days, a ready and extensive credit with Captain Topfodder the merchant. In the days of his too evident decline, he had an account even greater still, whose remote settlement agitated greatly the waking hours of that worthy ex-commodore of canal-boats. Mar'se Dab's wages to his hired hands, and the advances to his tenants, came more and more, as time went on, in the shape of little notes on the torn leaf of a pocket-book, written in pencil, to the long-suffering captain. There were whole files of these scrubby little remnants stored away in the desk behind the counter, running after this fashion mostly :

'To Cap. TOPFODDER.—Please supply Chris' Johnson with goods to amt. $1.75.—Yr. friend, D. DIGGES.'

The captain began to wish he hadn't been quite such a friend to Dabney Digges. As he sat tilted back in his straw-bottomed chair on the store porch, squirting tobacco-juice over the railing and calling to his customers, as they rode past, to 'lite and set awhile,' he ruminated over the possibilities of how upon earth at this late date he could alter matters without appearing unneighbourly. The captain did get so far as to say in public that 'Dab Digges was the hardest man to git money out of in North Berkeley.' Besides the mill and the store there was a wheelwright's shop, whither ploughs and wagon bodies and dilapidated buggies retired for repair for indefinite periods, and grew weather-scarred and almost mossy from long hope deferred. There was the forge, too, of a blacksmith, who was always out of coal or 'gone away to 'tend his crap,' and an Episcopal church, that had of late years found it exceedingly difficult to procure, or at any rate to retain, the services of a parson.

Mar'se Dab was a man rough of speech, as has been implied. He didn't say negro, nor even nigro, but always used the word 'nigger,' which, strange as it may appear to

outsiders, was seldom used by well-bred Southern men, and never by ladies. 'Those durned niggers!' Mar'se Dab used to be fond of saying, 'ought to be put right back in slavery—a triflin', no 'count parcel of scoundrels.'

This was, of course, mere verbosity. The captain would have been miserable if he had not been surrounded by his dusky crowd. Most people in the neighbourhood no doubt agreed with the sentiments so baldly expressed by Mar'se Dab; but they acted up to their opinions, and dispensed as much as possible with Ethiopian assistance. But the captain did nothing of the kind. He collected all he could lay hands on, and established them upon the Clover Hill plantation. 'Dawg my skin!' he used to roar out; 'I must have a big force of these scoundrels, if I am going to make any terbaccer worth speaking about. I tell you, sir, folks may talk about grass, and stock, and fruit, and such-like. Terbaccer made old Virginia, not termaters, and, by golly! I 'm goin' to hold on by it any way.'

Mar'se Dab did really understand the science of tobacco growing and curing. It was the management of free labour, and the keeping in heart, by judicious cultivation, a limited amount of land, that beat him.

When I first knew Mar'se Dab, his system was in full blast. I have mentioned that he recommenced life with some ready money, as well as free from debt. Now there were two or three years about that period when prices were exceptionally high, for artificial reasons that originated with the war. Mar'se Dab's credit was good, and he seemed for a time to be actually prospering in spite of his defiance of economic laws. He came to believe in himself more than ever. He ridiculed his neighbours who sowed clover and agitated themselves on the subject of the improvement of stock. His loudest and most tremendous laughs were got off at the expense of a cousin of his wife's, who had set out

fifty acres of apple-trees in the mountains. When I last saw that cousin he was netting four thousand dollars a year from his orchards, and poor Mar'se Dab was in Western Kansas! Well, as I was saying, 'the pitching' of a great crop was the main idea in those days, not only on Clover Hill, but on many other places too. The negroes in the neighbourhood would flock to Clover Hill before Christmas-time to try and rent a bit of land or hire out to Mar'se Dab. Many, too, of the regular old Digges hands from Newtown again united their fortunes with the family in this manner.

It was noticed, however, that these last seldom stayed more than a year. The true reason of this may perhaps best be given in the words of old Uncle Reuben, one of the most attached of the bunch. It was a confidential communication, it is true, and delivered across the boundary fence which separated my own woodland from the tobacco patch on Mar'se Dab's land, which old Reuben was working. After all these years, however, there could, I think, be no sort of objection to recalling some of the old man's remarks.

'Mar'se Dab,' said the patriarch, 'is a mighty good man, but he ain't like his pa. I bin raised with quality folks, and knows what they is. Thar ain't no fambly in the State as held therselves higher or more 'sclusive than our folks done useter. But Mar'se Dab! Lor'! he don't seem to have no respect for hisself or fambly. It make me feel mighty bad to hear him cutt'n' up, a-rippin' an' a-swarin' an' a-hollerin' roun' like the ordinary white folks at this upper 'een of the county, that ain't had no raisin' wuth speakin' 'bout. I was a bit of a chap down at the big house when Mar'se Dab wur borned, an' when I heern him lettin' hisself down an' gwine on in sich a way, I feel powerfully moved to say suthin'. But he 's a rough man, Mar'se Dab, an' like as not to burst me all to pieces. It 'ud go mighty hard with the ole Miss' if she wur alive and know'd. She 'd get

after me, too, fur cert'n and sho', if she thote I 'lowed Mar'se Dab to run on without speakin' any. I 'll be powerful oneasy when I see old Miss' at de judgment, when de hearts of all men * * *.'

The asterisks represent one of those exhortations to which Uncle Reuben, since he took religion, had been addicted. But sound as was his doctrine, and eloquent as was his language, there is no space for even a sample of it. Upon this occasion, however, it was cut short, and the venerable man's attention turned somewhat abruptly to earthly things by his mule, which he had left standing in the tobacco-rows, getting his leg over the trace-chain, and showing a disposition to leave the field, plough and all.

'Stan' still, sah! What you warnt to be cutt'n' up fo'. It look like to me yo' oughter hev movin' roun' enough, and be prepar'd to stay quiet once in a while, and study over yo' foolishness.'

Unc' Reuben's mind, however, was not yet unburdened, for he returned upon another count.

'It ain't Mar'se Dab only. 'Spite of the rumpus and fuss he raises 'roun' him, thar ain't no kinder-hearted man north of Jeems River, or dis side of de Blue Ridge. I could put up with his rearin' an' pitchin' roun', for the 'spect I bar to the fambly, but, bless grashus! the niggers that Mar'se Dab's c'llected on this yer place! No one ever her'n me say a word 'gainst nobody; but I swar de solemn truth that the cull'd folks on dis yer plantation is de meanest, no 'countest crowd of niggers that Gord ever made. I ain't *all*together 'sprised, for I know'd what this yer north end of the county wur befo' de war. I don't hold as what some o' these yer plain white folks warn't mighty good masters to their servants; but then a cull'd man as ain't belonged to a good fambly, whar is he? He don't know nuthin' 'bout manners or 'spect for hisself. Now, sah, I

bin *raised*, I has! I ain't growed up like a sassafras bush in a ole turn'd-out field anyhow! Thar 's a heap o' difference 'tween white folks, an' thar 's a heap o' difference 'tween cull'd folks, too. Fur a gen'l'man as has bin raised among cull'd folks, Mar'se Dab beats anythin' I ever seen. He don't seem to know more 'bout 'em than ef he wur a Northern man. He don't study neither character nor princerples. Everybody layed out to git on this yer place, as they know'd it war a good plantation, an' that Mar'se Dab had right smart money by his wife an' a good force of mules.

'Gord knows whar sich niggers wur raised—up in de mount'ns as like as not. Dar 's bin a heap o' folk an' a heap o' house-buildin' on dis yer *plan*tation since de war. Dar soon won't be a house-log stanin' or a board-tree left in the woods. Dar 's bin land clur'd so nat'ral po' it 'ud skeercely sprout a black-eyed pea in the first crap. I mind the time when I usetest to come up yer in busy times. It wur a fine place, an' de craps wur powerful heavy den. The wheat wuz so rank I jes' told the jedge—Mar'se Dab's pa—that ef he warnted me to go up cradlin' wheat to Clover Hill, he 'd jes' have to trade me away fur some one who could do it; for my rheumatics was too bad, an' I couldn't an' I warn't agwine ter do it, not if he cut me in pieces fur it. Now, bless grashus! the heads ain't within hollerin' distance of one another.

'Yes, sah, dar 's a heap too many folk on this yer plantation, an' mighty po' kind of folk, too. It look like to me as if Mar'se Dab had been ridin' round the country fo' a yer or two an' skeered up all the meanest niggers 'twixt here an' the big mount'ns, an' sot 'em plum' down in a muss. Sich a stealin' an' lyin' an' cussin' an' rippin' an' rearin' an' tramplin' roun' never wur seed, an' yet thar 's mo' talk 'bout 'ligion here than most anywhar. To see 'em

scufflin' up to the mourners'-bench on preachin' Sundays—O-o-o-o-ēē !

'I laffed fit to kill myself las' Sunday when Brer Moses from Poplar Creek wur guvin' a open-air preachin' for the noo church fund. Well, sah, when Unc' Mose' had got through de preachin' he tuk off his felt hat, an' axed me to sukkerlate it roun' for the c'lection. Fo' Gord, sah, that ar ole hat of Brer Mose' passed aroun' from han' to han' o' that bowdaciously 'ligious crowd, and nar a quarter nor a ten-cent piece, nor even a nickel, wur drapped in the crown of it. I saw Brer Mose' face wukin' powerfully as the empty ole hat were comin' roun' to him agin, an' I could see he wur pretty mad. When it got to the man as wur stan'n' next him, he reached out his han' and grabbed dat ar hat in de biggest kind of a hurry—sorter makin' out as if he wur skeered he wouldn't han'le it agin. Well, sah, Brer Mose' in front o' all de folks fust looked at one side of de hat an' den at de other, an' den he crams it on his head an' hollered out, "Well, bredren, you isn't showin' yo'selves by yo' deeds 'preciative of all de blessin's showered upon yo', but tank de Lord I 'se got my ole hat back anyway—dat 's somethin' in these yer hard times." In all yo' born days, sah, you never seed a crowd of niggers look so mean. No, sah; I reckon I 'll git on down to the old place agin. Mar'se Ran, so long as he 's thar, 'll give me a house an' terbaccer patch. I ain't suited to these times nohow. A heap a hurrain' an' fuss was made 'bout dis yer friddom [1] an' that; but I b'lieve I 'd as lief things had stayed as they wur.'

'Durn that old man, Reuben !' said Mar'se Dab to me one day not long after this.

'What 's he been up to ?' said I. 'He 's the best hand you 've got.'

[1] Freedom.

'O Lord, yes! He 's a good enough hand; but I 'm blamed if I stand his nonsense any more! He 's just been spoiled down at home by our folks, and got to think I can't live without him. What d'ye think he did yesterday? He came up to the house 'bout sundown and said he wanted to speak to me. I thought, of course, a horse was sick or something, and went out to him; and I 'll be dorgonned if he didn't stand and lecture me for a half-hour, and would have gone on for two hours if I 'd 'a let him. He run on about my cut'n har, and said no Digges had ever cut har before; and that my pa and ma would get up out o' their graves and ramble roun' in 'straction if they thote I was goin' on so. As sure as I stand here, if the old scamp didn't go on to tell me he was afeared I hadn't any o' the old Digges dignity, and Lord knows what, till I took up a swingle tree and told the old scoundrel I 'd burst his head open if he gave me any more of his sass! "Oh, that 's right—that 's right, Mar'se Dab," says he. "Kill me, sah —for Gord's sake kill me! I bin yer in this wicked world long 'nuff anyway. I 'se made my peace, an' am ready to go right away. I 'll suttenly go straight to the ole mar'se and missus, an' tell them how yo' cutt'n up an' swearin' an' rippin' aroun'. Yes, knock me on de head, Mar'se Dab; I ain't keerin' much anyway. Folks' ways these times ain't my ways. I nussed you, Mar'se Dab, when you was so small you hadn't hardly commenced to notice. I shuk down apples for you, Mar'se Dab, befo' ever you put pants on. Go on, Mar'se Dab; kill me, sah! You 're mad now an' jes' think I 'm sassin'. One dese yer fine days you 'll say old man Reuben warn't sich a fule as I thote." If you 'd heard the old fellow, you 'd have been powerfully tickled. I shouldn't have cared, but he raised such a fuss a lot of the hands came round to listen.'

So Reuben, the last of the old generation, went, and Clover

Hill continued on its downhill course. The captain's notions of the capacity of land were drawn from no human standpoint. He ploughed up the hillsides; he ploughed up the bottoms. Noble groves of oak and chestnut fell before the destroying axe on ridges infertile for cultivation, and that the common sense of two centuries had left intact. So it went on year after year, red land and grey land, upland and bottom, turned and heaved unceasingly beneath the recklessly driven ploughs. Year after year the axe rang and the toppling trees crashed for new tobacco-ground. The negroes sang and shouted, and Mar'se Dab halloed and stormed, happy in the pandemonium he had created, and hugging even closer, as their evil fruit became apparent, the worst traditions of the past.

Tobacco, tobacco, wheat, wheat, corn, oats, wheat, oats, corn, corn——. This, I think, would fairly have described Mar'se Dab's method of rotation. This amazing tax upon the soil was not modified by any outside assistance. Some phosphate or stimulating fertiliser of a like kind was dropped in the hill with the second crop of tobacco; but the captain's favourite dictum was that 'commercial fertilisers would break any man.' There was, however, an immense bank of barn-yard manure accumulated round the stables, scorched by the suns and bleached by the rains, it is true, of many years, but still by no means valueless. Never, Mar'se Dab declared, when twitted by his friends upon the subject, could he find time to devote his wagons and horses to such a secondary matter.

The rotation above formulated with tolerable accuracy covers, it will be noticed, some ten years. This was about the length of Mar'se Dab's reign at Clover Hill, the year of collapse, when the long-suffering soil at last gave out, and absolutely refused to bear further the burden so unjustly laid upon it, and the property, in the estimation even of the

most reactionary Ethiopians, was 'run clean out.' The corn-stalks had shrunk to the size of your little finger, and, save in the rich hollows by the streams, produced nothing but 'nubbins.'[1] The wheat-straw was so miserably short, and the ears so scanty, that Uncle Reuben's forcible illustration as to their being scarcely within hollerin' distance of one another, was by no means so far-fetched. The oat-crops had grown so weak that the briars and bushes, rioting in the filthy soil, simply choked them out of existence; while the fierce winter rains had cut gullies down the hill-sides, which the thunderstorms of summer rent into ravines so deep that men and mules nearly disappeared from sight when they floundered through them.

Mar'se Dab 'died fighting.' It was the extraordinarily dry year of 188– that finished him. The sight of the crops on Clover Hill that year made venerable agriculturists weep who remembered the glories of the past. Mar'se Dab believed in tobacco till the last, nor was there anything unreasonable in his faith, considered in the abstract. It was his mode of applying it that was wrong. His tobacco he managed admirably. His plant-beds were burnt in good season. When the spring frosts cut other folks' young plants, or the fly got them in cold, dry weather, Mar'se Dab had always a plentiful supply. When 'planting out' came in June, the captain always had his land ploughed, harrowed, and hilled up, ready for the first good 'season,' and everybody in the plantation had ample warning of the coming rain. For so long as Uncle Reuben was there, he was better than fifty barometers. The signs had never been known to fail. When 'de mis'ry' took that venerable henchman 'in de left shoulder, there 'd be fallin' wedder befo' day, cert'n and sho'.'

No growing crop was better tended than Mar'se Dab's

[1] Short, deformed heads.

tobacco; and if some of the tenants' houses 'cured up a little blotchy' or 'ran some' during that critical period, it was because the boss, rustler though he was, couldn't be everywhere at the same time. But while Mar'se Dab's tobacco was well done by, everything else was neglected; and economic laws were defiantly and aggressively flouted. Clover Hill was not quite in the real tobacco-belt—that group of counties where the highest grade of leaf is produced, and where other crops may be safely made subservient to tobacco culture. These are technicalities, however, that would only bore the reader. I will simply quote once more that oracle, Uncle Reuben, who was fond of declaring that 'any one who put his main 'pendence on terbaccer in North Berkeley, 'ud git inter the porehouse sho'.' Mar'se Dab put his 'pendence on tobacco. He didn't go to the poorhouse, because he had a brother-in-law in Western Kansas of a kindly turn of mind; but the latter alternative was, I fear, only one degree removed from the former in the captain's mind.

I can recall his figure, as it were but yesterday, sitting on the roadside fence on a hot June morning, looking wistfully towards the west for the long-expected rain that would enable him to plant out his tobacco.

One glance at Mar'se Dab was sufficient to discover that he ignored the assistance of the tailor even more completely than he did that of the manure-merchant. But there was method and not madness in this. In his patriotic fervour, Mar'se Dab swore that he would wear nothing that was not manufactured in old Virginia. To a man who was fastidious about his personal appearance, such a resolution would have amounted (in those days anyway) to an astonishing pitch of self-denial. It was very praiseworthy in Mar'se Dab, no doubt, but I don't think it weighed oppressively upon him.

He had yellow homespun pants, the cloth of which had been woven by an old lady of colour up on the mountain, who still possessed that disappearing art, while the cut forcibly suggested Mrs. Digges' scissors. His boots were made by Uncle Reuben, who solaced himself in his cabin during the long winter evenings with shoemaking and the weaving of baskets. I once had a pair of boots from Uncle Reuben myself, but we will draw a veil over the recollection, and hasten on. Mar'se Dab despised a waistcoat, even in cold weather. His coat was always out at both elbows. Whether this was because he got the cloth by the piece from the new woollen mills at Barksville or not, I can't say. It was, I think, a kind of defiant tatterdemalionism that the captain liked to hug as a sort of mute undying protest against the disruption of the South's old institutions. For however great his financial difficulties might have been, they were not on a scale so trifling as to necessitate an exposure of both elbows. When his neighbours joked with him about his ragged edges, he used to say, 'Times were too durned hard for fancy dressin'.' Mar'se Dab's hatred of Yankees was conspicuous even at a period when sectional bitterness was extreme. It made your flesh creep to hear the pains and penalties to which he consigned in fancy his fellow-citizens north of Maryland. At election gatherings his defiant shout was the terror of Republican stump-orators and carpet-baggers. At the same time, I am perfectly sure that if a Connecticut man, even though he were loaded down with wooden nutmegs, stood in need of a dinner, and Mar'se Dab had only a crust, he would have shared it with him.

There is something, I think, in the culture of tobacco, as pursued from time immemorial in the Old Dominion, that appealed to the patriarchal instincts of the conservative Virginian. The innumerable wagon-loads of wood that are

set to blaze upon the new plant-beds in midwinter, to kill the germs of weeds and prepare the woodland soil for the tender seed; the crashing and tumbling of the forest-trees when 'new grounds' are being opened; the cheery shouting of the negroes, and the unwonted energy that any momentous undertaking, more especially if it is connected with tobacco, calls forth; the excitement and rush of transplanting from the beds to the field in early summer, when the necessary rain, perhaps, is scarce, and opportunities consequently few.

Then comes the period of watching, through the hot days of July and August, the gradual growth and expansion of the broadening gummy leaves to the sun, and all the risks of shattering hail-storms and of early night-frosts in September catching the 'crinkley' ripening plants before they are fit to cut. Then the critical period of curing; and lastly, the long journey, plunging through the mud to the market, where the interests of master and man, of landlord and tenant, are absorbed for a short and exciting period in the yellow-labelled heaps upon the warehouse floor, which the auctioneer is knocking down to local and foreign buyers. Perhaps it is in the rapid fluctuation of prices, and the speculative flavour thus imparted to its cultivation of the fragrant leaf that is part of the attraction.

Everything to do with tobacco Mar'se Dab loved with a hereditary devotion to the time-honoured product of his native land. Yet the making of tobacco, in his estimation, had gone to the dogs. The very seasons had altered since the war; the sun seemed to shine less brightly; the moon to shed a dimmer light (and Mar'se Dab believed in the moon); the summer dews to fall more sparingly than of yore. So, at any rate, Mar'se Dab was thinking, when we left him just now sitting upon the roadside, looking westward at the thunder-clouds.

The tobacco-land is hilled up, but scarcely half of it yet planted, though the young plants in the beds are actually pushing one another out of the ground from their size and vigour. The earth is dry and parched, and in ten days it will be July—and upon July-planted tobacco, everybody in Virginia knows, no 'pendence, as old man Reuben would say, can be placed. The great black cloud comes nearer and nearer; woods and mountains are absorbed, and vanish into the approaching gloom, while from the inky void there breaks gradually upon the silent air the hoarse roar of waters dashing upon a myriad leaves. Mar'se Dab's hopes have ceased to have even that slight element of uncertainty that is inseparable from the word. 'It 's come this time, any way,' says he, as he turns homeward, full in his mind of the big crop he will now pitch. The very spray of the coming storm scuds on the newly awakened breeze that is flying before it; and the red dust of the turnpike, as if its last chance for a frolic had come, whirls this way and that in the changing currents of the thunder-laden air. Everywhere there is the hurry of preparation for the coming storm. The Clover Hill domestics are hard at work rushing the family linen and mattresses off the front portico. Aunt Judy is racing after the young turkeys; the negroes have unyoked their teams from the corn-rows, and are hastening up to the barnyard, singing tearful dirges for joy at the 'prospec' of a season.' The spring calves in the yard are galloping hither and thither with their tails in the air, like quadrupeds demented; and old Uncle Reuben, at his cabin door, is reminding Aunt Milly that 'he 'd bin lookin' fur weather' (inspired, of course, by the sensations in his shoulder), 'but hardly reckoned it would cum befo' sundown.'

Here, happy in the prospect of at any rate planting out one more tobacco-crop, we must leave Mar'se Dab. If he

was obstinate and prejudiced, there was no kinder-hearted man, as Uncle Reuben said, 'north of Jeems River.' If he was loud-mouthed and boisterous, and stormed at his hands in a way that made him conspicuous in a place where these peculiarities are not common, it was, at the same time, the confiding fashion in which he supplied these very dependants with the necessaries of life in advance from year to year that hastened his downfall. His inability to refuse security for all the bacon and corn-meal, the cotton dresses and 'pars o' shoes' that the inmates of the twenty cabins on Clover Hill wanted, or thought they wanted, at Captain Topfodder's, no doubt swelled greatly the obligations that finally crushed Mar'se Dab. How the gallant captain came out among the creditors I never heard, and was most happily spared the harrowing spectacle of the sale of the worn implements, the lean draught stock, and the shabby furniture, though the details of this sad occasion were, of course, fully communicated.

Poor Mar'se Dab's chief creditor, a local Jew with a Scotch name, took over the place, and here is the advertisement of sale, cut out of the local newspaper of that date, and kept all these years as a memento :—

'FOR sale, on terms to suit purchaser, 13 miles from Shucksville and 1 mile from school, store, and mill, situate on the old Richmond Pike, 924 acres of fine rolling land, 100 acres original forest, 50 acres bottom-land; fine brick Mansion, with all necessary Outbuildings, and 16 Cabins. Price $9500. Apply at the Office of this Paper.'

CHAPTER XIII

A TURKEY HUNTER

As he never rose above the grade of corporal in the war, nobody ever quite knew what the captain took his rank from, though that was a trifle in Virginia. It was said that at some remote period before the war he had navigated a batteau on the rapid waters of the Staunton River, and had carried tobacco and grain for the planters in days when railways were distant and highroads, as now, the worst in the Anglo-Saxon world. So though an expert only in the handling of a punt-pole, the captain may be said in a sense to have been a member of the mercantile marine of his country. He had never in truth set eyes upon the ocean, nor had any desire that way ; nor did he come of a people that were much given to going down to the sea in ships. In fact he would often tell us, on any allusion to that element, that he ' had no use for so much water.'

Four main roads met in front of the captain's door, a circumstance which suited exactly his gregarious temperament. And they were roads such as only a Virginian would have faced upon wheels, or even calmly contemplated day after day as the captain from the security of his front porch contemplated them. One of these red rutty tracks came toiling up from regions to the eastward wholly given over and sacred to tobacco ; and if you had followed it on towards the sunset, and had not broken your neck or disappeared in a mud-hole, you would have found yourself eventually

within sight of the Blue Ridge faintly outlined against the distant sky. The other came from counties lying to the northward that had seen much better days, and after passing the captain's house, shot off in a straight line regardless of obstacles for the frontier of North Carolina, which was barely a dozen miles away. In fact the captain, who was born just here at the forks of the old Bethel and Shuckburgh pikes, had, as you may say, a narrow escape of being born a North Carolinian, and that would not have done at all. For everybody in Virginia, at any rate, knows that when a North Carolinian boasts of hailing from the Old North State, he takes very good care to add if he can conscientiously do so, 'but right close on the Virginia line.'

The captain rejoiced in a singular and dreary habitation, the shell of an old coaching inn, and a quite famous hostelry it had been in its day. First, however, came the railroads, and then the war which finally extinguished every spark of its ancient glory. For twenty years it had been slowly rotting, plank by plank, shingle by shingle. The captain, however, reckoned it would last his time, which was all that concerned him. A rough board at the corner of the fence bore an inscription, rudely traced in lamp black, to the effect that the weary traveller could still get accommodation for man and horse; while upon the next panel was inscribed in still larger letters the much less hospitable notification, 'No hunting or fishing here.' Such, it may be remarked, was the local and legal fashion of proclaiming that the proprietor was a game preserver; but of this anon.

As for the house, it was a rambling and now crazy edifice of wood, from which every vestige of paint had long since faded. The main central portion still stood fairly upright, but the two wings lurched away on either side as if threatening to part company altogether with the parent stem.

Long galleries ran around the outside of this unsteady structure both in the upper and lower stories, and helped, no doubt, to bind it together and prolong its precarious existence. Moss had taken hold of the twisting shingles of the roof. The tin gutter-pipes had shaken loose, and swung in strips from the eaves. There was hardly a pane of glass in the whole building except in the two or three rooms occupied by the captain and his rare guests ; and even there strips of the local newspaper did duty for many a vanished pane. Such of the Venetian shutters as survived swung loose, often upon only a single hinge, and with the dangling gutter-pipes made such an uproar on a windy night, that an abode which was dismal enough by day was truly terrifying in a midnight storm. The captain, however, cared for none of these things. The decay amidst which he lived never caused him, we will venture to say, even a passing qualm. The very extent perhaps of the dilapidations paralysed any feeble spark of energy he may have possessed ; and he lived as jollily as the proverbial sandboy amid his ruins. For there were rows of barns and stables in the oak grove behind the house, some of which had collapsed, the logs lying in a heap as they had fallen, while others leaned over at an angle that would have been impossible but for the heavy props that the captain and his negroes had been absolutely forced to put up in self-defence. And this was necessary, for besides the pair of mules the estate still boasted of, an occasional traveller of the humbler kind from time to time sought the hospitality of the dilapidated tavern. The captain, like every good Virginian, was greatly given to reminiscence, and his favourite theme was the animated splendour of the Plummer House in the old days when his father owned it. A somewhat notable rendezvous it had, in truth, once been, as was natural, seeing that it stood in the angle where the old highway from the Carolinas to the

north crossed the route along which the planters from the regions lying eastwards used to travel in some rustic state towards the fashionable spas in the Virginia Mountains. Family coaches, dragged through the dust or mud by sleek horses and piloted by negro coachmen, were almost daily visitors in those halcyon times throughout the summer season; while gay young bucks on well-bred nags rode in and out of the shady yard by the score, drank juleps on the verandah, or flirted and danced in the now lonely rooms with the fair members of 'First Families' who happened to be at that stage of their annual pilgrimage to the healing waters of the Alleghany Valleys. Never, perhaps, has highway tavern had a greater fall. The tobacco-wagon, plunging and crashing onwards to the still distant market town, is nowadays almost the only vehicle that ever pulls up before the deserted inn, and even the wagon-drivers in these hard times bring their own rations and camp, if benighted, on the patch of turf under the old chestnut tree at the cross roads. Still the captain, who is gregarious and has long outlived financial ambition, gets some satisfaction, at any rate, out of their society. And sometimes a casual horseman, unduly reckless of his pocket, and still more regardless of his inner man, would stay and face that nightmare of fat pork, soda-biscuit, and black coffee which the captain's wife provided in exchange for a twenty-five cent piece.

Though the captain would have registered himself as a hotel-keeper, as a matter of fact he was first and chiefly a turkey-hunter, and to support this inexpensive profession he owned, fortunately, about two hundred acres of land. Though the latter were perhaps as poor as any two hundred acres in Virginia, which is saying much, the captain's wants were so few and slight that when he had paid his taxes (amounting perhaps to some fifteen dollars), dull care may be said to have been wholly lifted from the establishment

till the next visit of the tax-gatherer. The farm was cultivated in irregular and spasmodic fashion by a couple of negroes, who worked it on shares, using the captain's mules and giving their landlord half the tobacco, two-thirds of the corn, and three-fourths of the wheat and oats. In a dry year the whole lot of it could, I think, have been put into a wagon and drawn to market by a pair of stout horses even over the Shuckburgh pike. Only a portion of the estate would any longer produce even such skeleton crops as the captain's negroes raised. The rest lay sick unto death with a sterility such as in any other countries known to man would be absolutely inconceivable where soil existed at all. Scrub pines and briars and sassafras and broomsedge had covered the corpse of most of the captain's property in their not unkindly grasp ; and for the rest it was a moot question whether they or the homestead would give out first. Even Uncle Moses and Jake Plummer (Jake had belonged in the days of slavery to the captain) had begun to complain, and think that the residential advantages of their master's property were almost too dearly purchased. But the captain troubled himself little about such things. For him the year had two seasons only—the one when it was possible to shoot, and the other when it was not. In the former few men were more active ; during the latter, including, of course, the spring and summer, none probably ever took their ease with more unswerving deliberation. For every morning after breakfast, when it was not raining, the captain carried his chair down from the rickety porch and set it against the rough trunk of a shady acacia tree, and as the shadow moved round with the sun the captain moved his chair round with it. So that while the morning found him with his eye upon the lower road, the evening found that watchful orb surveying the approach from the Piedmont country. This was not so much for possible

customers, who might, or might not, share the captain's midday meal, for that great man was not in the least degree mercenary, but for such as might haply prove sociable and responsive to his urgent appeal to 'get down and chat him some.'

The captain's notice that his place was forbidden to casual gunners has been alluded to. It may seem strange that such an ardent sportsman, who hunted the entire country for some miles round, should have been so churlish about his own little domain of two hundred acres. But the danger-signal on the fence was not hoisted for the benefit of the captain's neighbours, who were rarely sportsmen, being small farmers mostly, with large farms (if the seeming paradox be admissible), but against that type of humanity which our friend designated as 'them city fellahs,' and for whom he was accustomed with great warmth and frequency to declare he had 'no manner of use.' In former days the very few gentry who lived in that neighbourhood had been wont to shoot partridges and rabbits in friendly unchallenged fashion over each other's and their humbler neighbours' land; but since the great upheaval social centres had wholly changed. What wealth and leisure for such sport existed had now mostly shifted to towns, and it was from there that the sportsmen chiefly came. 'Gawd knows who they are,' the captain used to say, as he sent a charge of tobacco juice at a sitting grasshopper, 'or whar they come from, a-whirlin' over the country as if it belonged to 'em with ther brichloaders and neepaty, napity[1] dawgs, and fancy coats, and pants, and fixin's. No, suh, I reckon no city chap 'll fire a gun off for a right smart ways up and down this yer pike. I 've fixed that, anyway.' And so

[1] This was, we believe, an entirely original phrase of the captain's, inspired by an occasional glimpse of the dainty Laverack setters that had been recently introduced into the country.

he had, for the danger-signal was upon every farm, though not against the captain, for five miles round. Not being a 'city fellah,' I had no cause myself to complain of this; and indeed I often shot with the captain's party, though never, if it could possibly be helped, upon the same beat with that hero himself, for he was not a pleasant companion after partridges, nor were his dogs shining examples to a young and heady setter in whose future you might feel an interest. He regarded you on such occasions rather as an opponent than a partner; and his great object was to bring down every bird wherever it might happen to rise, before you could pull on it, and so being in a position to boast of what he called 'beating the crowd' when the game was counted out at the end of the day. As the captain was only a very moderate performer at this work it resulted in his eye being wiped not seldom; and this he took so very much to heart that it was almost as distracting (for we had a great personal regard for the captain) as having him cut down your birds as they rose in front of you, or even upon your off side. I can see him now, in his big straw hat and flapping tail-coat, bustling up to the setting dog with elbows out, his gun at the ready, and an almost fierce expression of rivalry in his eye and general demeanour. His dogs would certainly not have been accused of being 'neepaty, napity,' for they were lumbering, poking brutes, with much more intelligence and nose than speed, till peradventure you knocked over a bird within range of their immediate vision, when they were fast enough in all conscience, and you would be fortunate indeed if you got there in time to save a wing-feather. The captain had a gun, too, that was something worse than a curiosity. It may be superfluous, perhaps, to remark that it was a muzzle-loader, but its ancient stock was a masterpiece of splicing and riveting. The barrels, too, were worn as thin as a six-

pence, and though they had so far withstood the captain's 'loads,' as he called them, the nipples were accustomed upon occasion to blow off with a great sound, burying themselves in tree trunks or vanishing into space. This seemed in no way to disconcert the captain himself, but it made his friends feel that it was almost as dangerous to be behind as in front of him. It was for every reason a good thing, when you arranged a day over the captain's preserves, to make up a party of four, taking your own friend and your own dogs over one line of country, while the captain and some third party, who either did not know him or was used to him, took another. And the spirit of rivalry was always strong enough to make this eminent sportsman accede most readily to such a plan. For not only was his method of shooting irksome, and his gun dangerous in a mechanical sense, but his principles as regards safety of firing were hopelessly distorted. These latter, I recollect, were illustrated most forcibly upon a rather unfortunate occasion. A Canadian sportsman of some repute had come down to stay with us for the best fortnight of the partridge-shooting, and we had included in our programme a day over the captain's preserves. A party of four was as usual arranged, and it was easily contrived that we should separate, we two taking one beat and the captain with his friend taking the other. We had a big stubble field, however, to traverse upon this occasion before the company separated, and in it a covey of birds was flushed wild, owing to the jealousies of our various dogs. Beyond the captain at the extreme right of our line was his friend (not mine, thank goodness), and he had taken advantage of the brief halt to put his foot up on a fence, his back being towards us, for the purpose of adjusting a bootlace. A lagging bird in the meantime rose before the captain, and swinging to the right flew straight for his companion, who being about seventy to

eighty yards off, neither saw nor heard it. The captain, however, levelled his cannon with the coolest deliberation and fired. Down came the bird, and up sprang his friend with imprecations, loud and deep, it is true, but not a whit too strong for the occasion, for he had received most of the half-spent charge on his person. 'It 's all right, squire' (the victim was a magistrate), sung out the captain cheerily as he began calmly reloading his gun; 'I saw you had your back turned towards me.' The Canadian, who, as a matter of fact, was a British officer settled in Canada, an old and accomplished sportsman, was horrorstruck, not merely at the outrage, but at the matter-of-fact justification of it. It seemed to him that he had struck a country where the less vulnerable parts of a fellow-sportsman's body were ordinarily regarded as a fair target if they happened to be in the way. He refused in most uncompromising fashion to go another yard with such an appalling prospect before him, and declared that if I did not get him out of reach of the captain's gun at once, he would go home alone. It was fortunate for all parties that our paths here diverged. The story is, I believe, still told in St. John, New Brunswick, as an illustration of what to expect at a Virginia shooting-party.

It was at turkey-hunting, however, that the captain really shone. At game-shooting he was an ardent, but, as will perhaps have been gathered, a not very satisfactory performer; but at turkeys he was really great. Now the wild turkey, that noblest of woodland birds and wariest of feathered fowl, showed at that time over a large part of Virginia few signs of extinction. So long indeed as the tall primæval forests, dense pine woods, and abandoned fields cover so large a portion of the country as they then did, and doubtless still do, the turkey will successfully defy the efforts of the few hunters who are sufficiently skilled in the art to

menace his existence. For the captain's friend, the city fellah, would never cause a single feather of that proud bird's to tremble ; while as for the average sportsman, who has anything to do at all besides shoot, life is generally accounted too short for a pursuit that consists wholly of woodcraft, contains so many certain blanks, and in which marksmanship plays so small a part. But for the captain life was not too short for what was in fact its principal object. Partridge-shooting was only a secondary matter with him, as indeed he was in that department but an indifferent performer.

It was when the first sharp frosts of October had fired the woods with the gorgeous splendour of decay that the captain began to stir himself after his long siesta, and fetch down from over the mantelshelf not only the double-barrelled fowling-piece already noticed, but the long Kentucky rifle that had belonged to his father, and that he still used for squirrels and, upon certain occasions, for the noble turkey himself. His crops were housed, such as they were ; his tobacco was being ' fired ' in the barn, such as it was, and coming out all the colours of the rainbow ; and Jake and Uncle Moses for the fifth or sixth year in succession were vowing that they would quit farming. And it was at this season that the young broods of turkeys, who roamed the woodlands or picked their way stealthily through the sedgy fields, became lawful prey under the game-laws of Virginia, to those who, in the local vernacular, could succeed in ' catching up with them.' These flocks, or gangs, numbered as a rule from eight to fourteen birds, and by this time had grown to be nearly the size of the highly educated old veterans, their parents, who watched over their wanderings. In every great stretch of woodland, or where continuous belts of timber touched, or almost touched, each other, there one brood at least would be found ranging, always within

certain more or less definite limits. Wherever, too, a mountain spur threw its wooded crest a few hundred feet above the low country, it would almost certainly contain a brood of these stately timorous birds.

The captain had by instinct and experience a pretty accurate notion where to find the various gangs. But not a farmer, nor even a negro, passed along the highroad in August and September who was not ready to place the results of his local observations at the service of the 'popular landlord of the Plummer House,' as the county paper, in serio-comic vein, was accustomed to speak of our friend. For myself, though I made a point of having one or two excursions of this kind every year with the captain, whose sumptuous hostelry was about forty miles off, I could not boast of even the most elementary proficiency in the art. Life, as I have said, seemed too short, and such measure of skill as I possessed in stopping the rapid twisting partridge of Virginia would have been entirely thrown away in hunting the turkey. For when that noble bird could be induced to present you with a shot, it was usually a sitting one; and even when otherwise, the familiar metaphor of a flying haystack was in such case almost literally applicable. But the essence of the achievement lay in securing the shot; and I am free to confess that, save when under the wing of the captain and the shadow of his blunderbuss, the elusive tactics of the king of forest-birds were too many for me.

The chief and vital accomplishment, without which you could not hope to be a turkey-hunter, was that of imitating the call of the wily keen-eared bird, which sounds simple enough; but as a matter of fact it was extremely difficult. The implement used for this nice deception was usually the wing-bone of the turkey itself, which seems surely the very refinement of guile. It was by no means difficult with a

little practice to imitate the 'tuk! tuk!' of your intended victim entirely to your own satisfaction, and to that perhaps of some inexperienced companion; but if you could not convince the bird to an absolute certainty that you were one of his relatives, or should he suspect for a moment that there was treachery in the note, you might just as well, so far as getting a shot was concerned, have fired off both barrels into the air. Perhaps even more profitably, for sometimes a great alarm, such as the rush of a barking dog towards a flock, would act upon it in a paralysing or stupefying fashion. Indeed, many turkey-hunters, the captain included, kept a small dog trained to run in and bark after the shot for the purpose of scattering the birds. The captain's 'tuckey-dawg,' as he called it, was a remarkable-looking varmint, being what was generally known in Virginia as a 'fyce,' a term—Elizabethan-English, I believe—which was applied in the South to every species of small dog indiscriminately. The captain's fyce was of a yellow shade, with the head of a fox, the curly tail of a squirrel, and the legs of a turnspit. He would have been locally described as 'a bench-legged fyce.' His chief mission was to tree squirrels, and to bark up the trunk till the captain, with his long small-bore Kentucky rifle, arrived upon the scene. For this great sportsman took sometimes what he called 'a spell of squ'r'l hunt'n',' the large grey squirrel being a popular luxury on the tables of the plainer country folk.

We used to start generally about sunrise on those glorious autumn mornings. So far as my own feelings were concerned, there was none of the gravity and responsibility of a campaign against the partridges. I was out to enjoy myself in an irresponsible fashion, to revel in the gorgeous colouring of the woodlands, to drink in the fresh, balmy, resinous air of early autumn, and take any bit of luck that came with thankfulness. But the captain, I need hardly

say, was serious enough on such occasions. I can see him now climbing stealthily up the broken surface of the rudely cultivated or abandoned fields that stretched up to the edge of the forest which clothed the low mountain spur, his keen and experienced eye searching everywhere for some faint print on the red clay or black loam that bespoke the recent wanderings of the gang, and the direction in which their footsteps had been bent. It was not, however, till we entered the forest above the highest line of cultivation that the time arrived for absolute silence and the extremity of caution. There was here little underbush or covert in which birds might be taken unawares, for the tall grey trunks of chestnut, oak, and poplar shot up from a smooth carpet of dead leaves, while far above our heads, broken here and there with patches of bright blue sky, hung a motionless canopy of leaves, one gorgeous blaze of scarlet and gold. Slowly and cautiously, about a hundred yards apart, we stole along between the tree-trunks, up the long ridge of the mountain which, dipping slightly here and there in its ascent, afforded a possible chance of coming unawares upon the birds. The captain's gun was loaded upon no recognised principle, for he carried his shot in a medicine-bottle and his powder in a mustard-tin, the well-worn flasks being generally laid up for repairs ; and the fyce dog, with its bushy tail curled over its back, prowled along behind him. But so clearly do these occasions come back to me, I must drop into the present tense.

We are already very high up in the world, and the silence of the Indian summer in these lofty forests is intense. The bark of a squirrel, or the hoarse call of a crow, seems to make the whole air tremble. Far away below us lies the many-coloured rolling plain of old Virginia, basking in the sun with its red fallows and now golden forests and dark splashes of pine wood. The white gleam of a homestead shows here

and there, while a score of scattered smoke-wreaths mark the site of tobacco-barns where the newly-gathered leaves are slowly curing. A faint grey outline rolls along the far horizon, marking the Blue Ridge Mountains. The song of a ploughman, the bark of a dog, the thud of an axe come up faintly from far below ; but where we are walking the mere snapping of a twig makes a noise like a pistol, and has at all hazards to be avoided if we would hope to keep on good terms with the captain, and catch, perchance, the wary turkey napping below yonder ridge. There is little other game or even bird-life in these silent altitudes. The woodpecker taps as if he revelled in the noise he made ; the grey squirrel, safe to-day at any rate from the captain, leaps from tree to tree or scuttles up the horny trunks ; Brer Rabbit (for this, it must be remembered, is the land of Uncle Remus) is much too sociable to mount so high above civilisation, though his old friend, the fox, now and again on these occasions steals across one's vision. It is just possible, too, that a brood of ruffed grouse, rare though the bird is east of the Alleghanies, and almost as shy here as the turkey itself, may haunt this wooded hilltop. But should one of them, by some unwonted freak, get up under the very muzzle of the gun, refrain, as you value the captain's alliance, from yielding to temptation ; for so far as turkeys are concerned, a shot in these silent, echoing woods would most certainly ruin everything for the day, or at least for the morning. It is well, too, to keep an eye upon the leaves over which we are carefully treading. For the captain, at any rate, would notice in a moment the slightest disturbance of their surface, and can tell at once whether it is the work of turkeys, and almost estimate the length of time since they were scratching among them.

Suddenly from just beyond the ridge, a hundred yards or so to the left, a sound like an explosion of dynamite

seems to shake the whole mountain. The captain has fired off his gun, and he never fires at anything less than a turkey on these occasions. A hasty flank movement of a few yards reveals the situation, and a sound as of heavy wings flapping follows the concussion of the shot. The fyce dog, with tail well curled over his back, is charging along and yelping furiously, in a state of great excitement. The captain is reloading his piece from the medicine-bottle and the mustard-tin, with a sheet of the county paper for wadding, and it is perhaps needless to remark that his left barrel remains at full cock during the operation.

The whole gang have risen, it appears, at long range from behind some old panels of a boundary fence. The captain fired, it seems, merely with a view to scatter the birds, though he declares he crippled one. It may be added that he has never yet been known to admit missing anything clean; and indeed, 'the captain's cripples' have passed as an expression into the local phraseology.

And now comes the really serious part of the whole day's proceedings. The birds are thought to have been partially scattered, thanks to the noisy efforts of the bench-legged fyce well supported by the captain's artillery, and also to the fact of their having been taken unawares. It now only remains to select a favourable position upon the ridge where we can both shelter ourselves from view, and at the same time command all the likely approaches. A great chestnut trunk, lying prone and dead these three or four years, favours the design and offers an excellent ambuscade; so crouching behind it we possess our souls in patience for a time, and discuss the situation in a low tone. Then in the fulness of time the captain prepares to play upon his little pipe, and with lips compressed and cheeks distended the performance commences. 'Tuk, tuk, tuk, tuktuk!' But the only answer comes from some solitary hoarse-voiced

crow, or the rat-tat-tat of a woodpecker; and in the pauses between the captain's efforts the silence is only broken by the dropping of acorns and chestnuts round us or the light scrape of a squirrel on the leaves. It may be a long time before my companion's industrious and careful piping is rewarded, or it may be, as the song says, for ever. In this case, however, response comes at last to proclaim that one, at any rate, of the scattered birds is moving on the slope of the mountain below us.

Now the exciting period begins. We cease to speak even in whispers. The fyce dog lies low and, cocking his short ears, watches wistfully the rugged, hairy face of his master, which is certainly worth watching, as he holds treacherous converse with his unsuspecting victim. These are indeed far the most serious moments of the captain's life. A false note might mean ruin, and it is evident from the answers that another bird has now joined the first one. We no longer dare show even our noses above the log, and can judge of the birds' approach only by their answering notes. In ten minutes or so the 'tuk, tuk,' gets very near; the birds must be almost within shot. The captain's veins fairly swell, and the perspiration stands out on his forehead with the responsibility of piping correctly at so short a distance, for we can hear their feet actually treading on the dry leaves, and it occurs to me how disastrous were a sneeze at this moment. The turkeys are now beyond a doubt within easy shot. The captain is to give the signal for action, and he grasps firmly his big gun, with five drachms of powder in each barrel if there 's a grain this time, I 'll warrant. It is not a pleasant gun to be at close quarters with, and for my part I do not like it. 'Now!' says the chief, and at the word we both spring into a kneeling position above the log. A couple of big gobblers fill our horizon. They have just time to lift their heavy wings.

The captain does not take my bird this time : it is too serious an occasion, and we fire simultaneously.

There is a sensation for a moment as if the drum of my ear is broken, and my head sings like a tea-kettle. A cloud of smoke hangs like a pall over everything for a second or two, for the captain not only uses black powder in such large doses, but buys it at the country store. Both birds are dead, of course. Nothing but the equivalent of 'buck fever,' and we are both of us fairly safe from that, could produce any other result. The captain has fallen back on his elbow for the moment ; most people would be flat on their back from such a shock. 'Dorgonne it,[1] that ar blamed nipple has blowed off again!' And so it had. Still, no one is hurt, except the turkeys, and we go home rejoicing under the weight of our somewhat heavy spoil, while I seriously turn over in my mind whether it would not be worth while for the captain's friends to raise a fund among themselves for providing him with a gun that would stand his 'loads,' and be less of a trial to his shooting-partners.

[1] The Virginians were not a swearing people, in the technical sense. The full-mouthed oath was reserved for rare occasions, when it was used with the more effect. This mild expletive of the captain's, however, was universal among the plainer people throughout the South, and obviously of time-honoured usage. Most outsiders regarded it as a weak, mock-modest substitute for the stronger term it suggests. This, however, is unjust. Only recently I ran across it, to my surprise, used once by one of Sir Walter Scott's Border characters. This set me inquiring, during a recent visit to that country, and I found several people who had been quite familiar with it in the mouths of an older generation. Scott spells it 'dagone it.' As Virginia proper is overwhelmingly English in descent, the expression was probably imported by the Scotch-Irish, who filled the western borders of the State in the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER XIV

SOME PLANTATION AND OTHER MEMORIES

In the whole of Virginia—and that is saying much indeed—there was no more glorious prospect than the one upon which our first plantation[1] looked out. Around us spread in pleasant undulations of fallow and forest, of tillage and pasture, the warm, rich-coloured but ragged landscape where Virginian homesteads, gentle and simple, lay supinely amid their groves and apple-orchards. Behind us the incomparable peaks of the Blue Ridge Mountains lifted their heads many thousands of feet into the sky. Before us a tributary range, scarcely less beautiful, if less majestic, spread heavenwards a boundless sea of woodland upon which the bloom of spring, the lush greenery of summer, the fire of autumn, the white terror of winter, proclaimed in a succession of splendid pageants the flight of our placid lives.

This neighbourhood, where we lived for the first few years, was beyond doubt a bit isolated, a fact which perhaps accounted for old-time ideas dying harder than in other regions with which I afterwards became familiar—particularly among the negroes. Of these, great numbers of the best of the old régime were still, at the time I write of, living and in their prime, and some of them were for general purposes as reliable and trustworthy as good English farm-

[1] The term *Plantation* was usual for all classes of property, and derived, I think, from the early colonial significance of the word as applying to people, not crops.

servants. Their families had generally got out of hand, but the older darkies were often the very models of industry, and sometimes even of honesty. One old man in particular, whom we found upon the plantation renting an outlying cabin and a few stony acres in a mountain hollow, answered in some respects to this description. So far as cleared land went, he had what he would have himself called 'a mighty po' chance fur terbaccer,' which at that time was the crop that dazzled and filled the eye of the emancipated slave. But old Uncle Archie had two or three stalwart sons who worked out for wages, and when he went into this dignified retirement he forgot that the patriarchal era was over in Virginia—between parent and child as between master and slave. The old gentleman was quite surprised when his 'chaps' showed a disposition to appropriate their own wages to their own uses. Archie had built this cabin himself after the war in a corner of the plantation, at the foot of a heavily timbered mountain, whence a crystal brook, breaking from the shade of the forest, went babbling over his patch of open tillage land. Upwards over this wide expanse of oak and chestnut foliage the old man had gazed with sanguine eye, and pictured the tall trees tumbling in every direction, and vast tobacco lands opening, beneath the sturdy strokes of his obedient and filial offspring—inspired, of course, and directed by the wisdom that lay beneath his own snowy brow. But Archie's 'chaps' showed no disposition whatever to develop a family estate for their clothes and rations, when they grew to be worth ten dollars a month to any farmer in the neighbourhood. 'I 've dun frailed them chillern' (they were eighteen and twenty) 'till my arms jes ache,' the old man used to complain, 'but it ain't no manner of use—these new-fangled notions of projeckin' roun' fust hyar, den dar, there ain't no satisfyin' young folks these times.'

So the forest above Archie's cabin continued to wave in all its pristine luxuriance, and to this day I have no doubt the wild turkey still leads her young in summer-time beneath its friendly shades, and the squirrel gambols amid its giant trunks, and the spotted woodpecker still wakes with cheery tapping its mysterious echoes.

Uncle Archie, it will be gathered, was a *laudator temporis acti* of the most pronounced kind. I think if he could have had his own way he would have reversed the issue of the war and put his whole race back into slavery again. The times, according to Archie, were all out of joint. The revolt of his sons sat sorely on his mind. He had been an industrious, hard-working man all his life and had belonged to a kind but hard-working master—one of those thousands of small slave-owners of whom the usual literature on this subject shows its ignorance by taking no account. Rough, decent men, whose appearance, education, habits, and means were those of small working farmers, neither more nor less, who owned perhaps a single family of coloured folks, and not seldom laboured with them on the small farm that supported all.

Archie had looked forward to working a bit of rented land with his own family upon somewhat the same principles—inclusive of the whip, if needed. He was an ardent member of the coloured Baptist Church, and had hoped, no doubt, for a leisurely as well as a dignified old age in which he could pursue, on fence-rails and at cross-roads, that taste for religious discussion and controversy which his soul delighted in. Still he raised a tobacco crop of sorts, enough to prove, at any rate, that the filial instincts of Jake and Washington were not wholly dead, while his corn-patch supplied at least his daily bread. A pig or two, moreover, called him owner, and carried ruin and destruction in the point of their snouts all over the plantation; and a brindled

cow, which, even with a forefoot tied to its horns, could jump any fence in the neighbourhood, completed Archie's stock.

The old gentleman was quite as honest as he knew how to be. He never succeeded in paying any rent, it is true; but the desire to do so was the burden of many an eloquent harangue, which was something. Archie, however, as a weather prophet and as a character which memory is thankful for, was well worth the twenty-five dollars a year which constituted his nominal tribute. He died in the odour of sanctity—lecturing us all to the last on the degeneracy of the world since the 's'render,' and foretelling the doom of Sodom and Gomorrah for a land where age and authority were getting to be at such a discount. We had a negro burial-ground on the plantation, and thither Archie's remains were dragged in solemn state by his neighbour William Henry Higginbottom's bull. There was snow on the ground, I remember; but it was a Sunday, and half the negroes in the county were there. It was always said that the patriarch would 'walk,' and 'walk' he did, sure enough, for he was seen in the full moon of the April following his death sowing a big field near the house that had been fallowed for oats; for it should be remarked that he was the great grain-sower of the neighbourhood, and it was natural enough that his spirit should be restless while the dust from the harrows was actually blowing over the fence on to his newly-made grave. He was seen again, too, in the same week by Lizzie, the cook, hovering in spectral fashion around the tobacco-plant beds he had sown just before his death. We were already, indeed, somewhat overrun with ghosts—thanks to the possession of two graveyards, whose inmates, if negro tradition were to be believed, were of the most uneasy kind.

I may remark in passing that the ghosts, or, in negro

parlance, the ' hants,' of our neighbourhood appear to have retained, even in the after-world, their devotion to agriculture. For whether white or black it was in the dawn of spring that they were always ' looked for ' ; nor, like orthodox ghosts, did they haunt bedsides or passages, but were to be seen rather in the neighbourhood of corn-cribs, wheat-fields, or tobacco-barns. I had a negro man for years who wouldn't have gone home to his cabin by himself after dark on any consideration. The older part of our house—date 1787—was supposed to be haunted, and if it had not been the custom for negro servants to sleep in their own cabins, we should have been greatly inconvenienced. An iron ring remained in the wall of my dressing-room, to which an insane member of some former owner's family had been chained in days long past, and it was this unfortunate lunatic that provided us with our ghost.

The mention of Archie's funeral obsequies recalls another of his neighbours and our tenants, who held a remote corner of the estate, and this was the aforesaid William Henry Higginbottom. Most of the negroes after the war took their late masters' names, but no Higginbottom had ever been heard of in those parts. This was serious, it is true, but not surprising, seeing that the bearer of so much name had come from the lower counties since the war, and was in some sort an alien as well as a suspect. Negro nomenclature was terse as a rule, and it was probably in tacit disapproval of William Henry's personality, and of the sort of mystery attaching to him, that he was usually called by all his three names, and, in spite of his grizzled locks and furrowed face, never achieved the honoured sobriquet of ' Uncle.'

In features William Henry was the most forbidding, as in form he was quite the most comical, negro I ever saw. We found him inhabiting a cabin close to the house, and

thought at first his looks might belie him. It took about a month to find out from experience that they did not. Hence his removal to the slope of the mountain, where he undertook to raise corn and tobacco on shares.

William Henry was, to use the vernacular of the neighbourhood, a 'mighty low man'—in a physical sense, that is to say—for he was barely five feet, while he had a head upon him the size of a Missouri pumpkin. He could neither laugh nor could he joke like the rest of them. I never saw him even smile, but there sat upon his dark deeply-seamed face a perennial frown. In winter and even in summer he wore a long tail-coat that had once been black; and if the front view of him was hideous, his reverse side was much the funniest in the whole county. But what made William Henry famous, even more than his whispered crimes and his grotesque appearance, was his bull, or in the local phraseology his 'gentleman cow.'

For when he moved to his mountain farm with nothing but his household truck, it seemed a problem to his neighbours how the stony acres were to be cultivated. But William Henry was equal to the occasion, and one fine day his establishment was seen to be augmented by a two-year-old bull that was as mysterious in origin as the owner himself. There was no direct evidence that our Mephistopheles was a criminal, though he was said to be capable of any enormity. That he stole that bull I am afraid there is little doubt, and it was whispered that he drove it, with the help of the Evil One, whom he was supposed to resemble, in the night over the almost pathless mountains that divided us from the adjoining county.

Wherever William Henry got his bull, he certainly made it earn its keep. He hitched it to his rude plough and his clumsy harrow. It pulled the rough hand-sled on which he hauled his firewood and his fence-rails; while on its broad

back, behind a sack of corn, the owner himself might often be seen perched upon his way to the mill. Such spectacles as these, however, were familiar enough in the old happy-go-lucky Virginia life. But even in Virginia, so far as I ever saw or heard of, the bitting, bridling, and saddling of a bull was an unprecedented performance.

But William Henry was nothing if not unconventional. And it was with no sense of humour whatever, but in a solemn seriousness which heightened the sublimity of the spectacle, that he used to clap an old broken English saddle I gave him on to the broad back of the patient beast, and seat himself astride thereon, and turn his face on Sunday mornings towards the negro church at Mount Hermon. Mr. Higginbottom, it is perhaps needless to remark, was no church member. The vacant seats upon the mourners' bench had no attraction for him, nor had the eloquent black forefinger or strident appeals of Brother Moses ever moved a muscle of the scowling furrowed face. But, for some mysterious reason, William Henry was always to be found at Mount Hermon on a preaching Sunday—silent, inscrutable, and forbidding in a back pew—while outside, hitched to a tree in the shade, stood the Durham bull, with its saddle and bridle, all unconscious of any indignity of treatment.

The first time we ever sighted this never-to-be-forgotten spectacle was, I remember, upon the Sunday on which Archie's funeral sermon was preached, in the summer following his death, and all the negroes in the neighbourhood had flocked to hear how Brother Moses thought the illustrious dead was getting on in Paradise. We were sitting in our porch as the advanced guard of the returning congregation came into view upon the highway. This consisted as usual of those negroes who could either beg, borrow, or steal their master's mules for the day, or, being

tenants at a money rent, had some attenuated quadruped of their own. As the capering, chattering crowd came along amid a cloud of red dust, William Henry Higginbottom could be seen holding a clear lead of several lengths, mounted on his bull, which was travelling at a steady, swinging, business-like trot. That its back was no armchair was evident, for William Henry's long coat-tails were flapping in painful agitation, as with a rein in each hand, he leaned back in characteristic southern fashion till his short legs, which were short even for so 'low' a man, came not far off the level of the straight horns of his extraordinary mount. The ordinary negro upon his master's mule, and attired in his full Sunday war-paint of black broadcloth and white shirt-front, was a sight entirely edifying; but William Henry Higginbottom, leading the queer crowd upon his bull, solemn and gloomy, without the faintest suspicion of any humour in the thing, was a sight to have lived for.

But there was a serious side to life of course, and John Jones, who was our largest tenant, took it very seriously indeed. He held nearly a hundred acres, and actually hired labour on his own account. Indeed he was justly regarded as 'a 'sponsible man.' He got a good house with his holding, built of squared logs and shingle-roofed, and a garden-patch, and the run for a cow, which, like Archie's, no fence could turn. John farmed his land on shares—we providing the horses and implements, he the labour; and, like a few of his kind, at that period he was an indefatigable worker. From dawn till dark he never rested except to feed his teams and get his meals, and I have even known him to work all night when the weeds in his corn or the suckers on his tobacco had got ahead of him. In spite of his practical qualities, however, John was as comical a character in his way as William Henry. He thought he could write, for one thing—an almost unknown performance

at that time—and he was inordinately proud of it. Furthermore, he had, as is rare among his race, a bad stammer, with terrific facial contortions. This is sometimes sufficiently trying in a Caucasian, but in a negro of quizzical appearance it was simply irresistible, and John's appearance was not calculated to bear any further embellishments of the kind. He was of the round, smooth, beardless, and oily type of Ethiopian, as black as a coal without a touch of cross about him. He was a stranger to the neighbourhood, and came to us, I remember, one autumn before wheat-sowing, which was the season of the year all over Virginia for making contracts. I can see him now as he stood at the foot of the verandah steps, with his mouth twisted nearly round to his ear trying to tell me who he was and what he wanted. His craze for writing, though it was in no way connected with his halting speech, came out instantly, and he insisted on being allowed to write down his late employer's name and address for reference. This was an unprecedented experience, so I fetched him a pen and ink and set him down at the office table, while we watched the performance. It was a heroic struggle, and resulted in the most wonderful specimen of orthography probably then in existence. I have got it yet. John surveyed it himself with one eye closed for a few seconds, and evidently felt that it was a failure. 'He 'd got sort er onused to writing,' he said, 'since he 'd been down ter the mines, but he 'd jest like to mark down his own name on the paper lest we should forget it.' This ceremony was got through with less exertion, but it was well I had not to depend on the result to save John's name and memory from oblivion. Still, the hieroglyphics stood for John Jones in their maker's estimation, though in that of any one else they might as readily have represented Thomas Evans or Henry Brown. I never saw a man so devoted to signing his name. I believe he would

have backed a stranger's bill for all he was worth, if he had been worth anything, rather than miss the opportunity.

When he settled on the plantation, I used to draw up agreements for all sorts of trifling transactions between us, to give John the pleasure of affixing his signature and myself the pleasure of seeing him do it. He would settle himself to the job as if to some weighty and solemn function. Slowly and with deliberation he would lay his left cheek down almost flat upon the table, and closing his left eye, which at such close quarters became unavailable for the purpose in hand, the squint of his right as it peered over the broad bridge of his nose at the objective point upon the paper was appalling. Little, indeed, but a big white eyeball was to be seen, and then after many flourishes of his pen above his head it descended on the sheet and left the fearful impress that signified John Jones. I generally managed to have a paper for John to sign when we had friends staying with us, and it was always voted much more entertaining than old Abner's banjo performance, though he was reckoned the best hand to ' pick a banjer ' in the whole neighbourhood.

The actual banjo of the plantation was not the stirring instrument it is in the hands of the Moore and Burgess minstrel, while a certain wild *abandon* it undoubtedly did possess in the cabin frolic after a wedding or corn-shucking disappeared when introduced into the parlour of the ' big house.' Abner, as has been said, was reckoned the best hand to pick a banjo in the neighbourhood. But when called upon to perform in private for our visitors he did not shine, and as an entertainment it could not be compared for a moment with John Jones signing his name. Abner, too, was a preacher—not a salaried, responsible minister like the dusky Boanerges who thundered weekly in the log church at Mount Hermon, but an amateur whose spasmodic exhortations formed a sufficient excuse for his immediate

neighbours to gather in his cabin on Saturday evening and work off their excess of religious emotion.

I have often been asked whether the genuine plantation negro was as comical a person as tradition represents. I can only say that to me their quaint humours were an unceasing source of refreshment. They made up, or almost made up, for those lamentable shortcomings which grew worse as the war and 'the s'render' faded further and further into the past. They have now, I think, long ceased to be a local peasantry identified with their native counties and districts, but have become to a great extent a wandering race—here for a year, there for a year; first in a factory, then in a mine, then back again for a brief spell at farming. And this, though not to the advantage of their morals, has been distinctly so to their financial condition. Indeed, under the agricultural depression that lay upon the southern farmer for so many years, and threw such an enormous amount of poor land out of cultivation, which there means into briers, bushes, and scrub pines, it was inevitable that the negro of the rising generation should leave the land. He has been a greater success, too, as a navvy, miner, or factory-hand, than he was as a farm-servant; but as a man he is an infinitely more unpleasant and much less humorous person, as is only natural. Hundreds, too, who, as lads, in the days I write of, were unredeemed plantation hands, whooping and halloing at the plough-tail without a thought beyond a corn-shucking or a cake-walk, are now sleek waiters in hotels, who know as much of the devilry of city life and the outer world as there is to know. Through whole counties in Virginia the exodus of the negro to busy centres could be seen years ago in the roofless cabin or the solitary chimney standing by the brookside or the forest-edge amid the broom-sedge and the briers. Yet however strong are the forces which remove an ancient peasantry from a not unkindly

and certainly a racy soil, there must always be a melancholy side to it for those who have seen the change.

In the days I write of no such exodus, in our part of the world at any rate, was thought of, and the Ethiopian, if unambitious, was at least cheery. Perhaps he was seen at his best in the first warm days of spring, when his limbs after the cold winter got 'souple and limber,' and the whole country echoed with his rude rustic melody. We always recall the months of April and May upon our plantation as an ideal Arcady—when through the lush and dewy nights the opening chorus of the tree-crickets and the plaintive call of the whip-poor-will welcomed the coming summer; when a sea of snow-white apple-blossoms caught the morning sun as he topped the hills upon the east, while upon the west the fresh greenery of summer was clothing with its leafy mantle the splendid masses of the Blue Ridge that towered above. All around us glowed against the warm red soil the freshness and the lushness, the leaf and blossom, of dawning summer, and the cheery stir of rural life gave animation to a scene which nature had fashioned and bedecked with such unsparing hand. The one-horse ploughs ran merrily up and down the corn-rows. The harrows clanked cheerily along their dusty course. No wonder that in such a climate farmers were sanguine, and that even the oldest of them estimated their crop with a persistent optimism at double what it turned out to be. Hope then animated every rural breast. The mating dove filled the orchard with melodious notes. The cock quail piped in the fence corner with tireless throat, while his partner hid snugly away in the adjoining cloverfield the fifteen or twenty eggs whose products were in the still far-off crisp days of November to spring before our keen-nosed pointers.

Above all, the pleasant echoes of field and woodland at that season of the year used to ring the voices of the negroes.

No people were more susceptible to stimulating atmospheric conditions than they. Nowadays, so small has the world —the English-speaking world, at any rate—become, that the field-hand is more likely than not to hill up his tobacco to the accompaniment of some music-hall ditty of London origin. In those days, however, a mighty gulf lay between Virginia and the world outside her borders : the old plantation songs were still the sole music of the plantation, and I can in fancy even now see Abner's son Tump, as he swung his plough round on the headland, lifting his shiny face skywards and bulging out his chest as he roared :

'O—O my lovely Lemma,
I—I do love you so ;
I—I love you better tha-a-n
I ever did befo'.
O-oh—O-oh.'

Then from the dewy low ground, where some rival swain in leisurely fashion was slaughtering the bushes that at this season threatened the very existence of the Virginia oat crop, came an answer to the vocal challenge :

'O—O my lovely Lemma,
I—I know you of old ;
You got all de money,
All de silver an' gold.'

Then from another quarter—far within our neighbour's domain—would roll the strident notes of that sonnet to 'Scindy,' which was the most popular negro air in our part of the world :

'Away up in de mountain
I took my horn and blow ;
I tink I hear Miss Scindy callin' :
"Yonder come my beau."'

But Tump, though half a mile off, would be equal to the occasion, and catch up the second verse :

'O Scindy, do you love me?
She said she loved me some,
An' I threw my arms around her,
Like a grape-vine round a gum.'

Though bad and cheap whisky was in those days readily available, the country negro was, speaking generally, not immoderate in its use. The grain was then still cut by cradles, and the custom was to give the mowers in the field two or three drams during the long day. Before each man tossed it off, it was usual to give what he called 'a toast.' Some of these were utterly irrelevant though quite according to custom. Here is a sample:

'There was as black a nigger as ever you did see,
Come all de way from Memphis in old Tennessee;
His eyes was red and his nose was blue—
Godal mighty spoke, and dat nigger flew.'

Then followed a brief vocal and physical demonstration of the dispatch with which this weird stranger fled before the supernatural threat.

Corn-shucking was the great social event of the agricultural year. It took place at night in November when all the negroes round collected to help, just for their supper and some whisky, which last they rarely abused, though it loosened their tongues and stimulated the songs and dirges which enlivened the proceedings, until long after midnight, when the corn-house was filled and the empty shucks lying in mountainous heaps around. It was a function well worth seeing and hearing. The ladies of a house used sometimes to go out and look on for a bit—and let it be said to the credit of the old Virginia negroes, that long after they were free and beholden to no one, they could be absolutely trusted at such a moment to behave themselves —well, let us say like gentlemen.

But volumes could be filled with the queer characters of both colours, the quaint customs and the unsophisticated ways that obtained in the country districts of Virginia in the days I write of. These days are gone for ever. Half the cabins in the State, probably more, have rotted away or been burnt for firewood. Agriculture of a large and careless sort is almost dead, killed by its own futility. The negro still in a measure follows the plough or wields the hoe, but more often, as I have already remarked, is a factory-hand, a miner, a waiter, or what not, and wears on Sunday a covert coat and a pot-hat, while his wife struts at his side attired in a caricature of the latest New York fashion.

One old man lived on my place—the father of quite an elderly labourer—who had passed his hundredth year, and could remember the close of the Revolutionary War, and the local rejoicings which celebrated the peace. Three years ago—and she may be living still—a white woman of that district was still receiving the pension due to widows of Revolutionary soldiers. As a girl of seventeen she had married an old man, as many did for the sake of the pension. The miller who ground my grain, a hearty old man, had followed General Harrison from Kentucky into Canada in the war of 1812. He died in my time. He had the reputation of a hard master in the slavery days, and it was expected by the negroes that he would 'walk,' and I believe he did not disappoint them.

The slaves in Virginia had been treated incomparably better than had been the case in the far south in the cotton and sugar regions. It really here deserved the title of 'Domestic institution,' so often applied to slavery. As a rule the slaves remained from one generation to another in the same families, or at least in the same group of families. They went with a marriage portion, and were sometimes sold or interchanged for convenience among friends, but not against

their will, and even occasionally for their own convenience, so that a husband and wife might be together. Those who had married into a neighbouring plantation, which was inevitably frequent, were given every possible facility for seeing each other. But though there were actually fewer negroes than whites in the State, there was always a surplus in East Virginia beyond the actual needs of agriculture. The climate was healthy, the life of the slave wholesome, and they increased abundantly. They were well fed, well housed, well clothed, and rarely overworked, while the feeling between them and their owners was almost always of the kindliest. And after all, compared to the West Indies, where from one to four thousand slaves had been quite a common possession for a single family, even the larger slave-owners in Virginia were on a very small scale. The great West India planters, as we know, could put an English estate on its feet, and constantly did so, with a daughter's dowry. A hundred head all told, or say twenty households, were accounted a large 'force' in Virginia, and this was well within the domestic compass. But thousands of negroes were sold south all the same from Virginia, long known as the chief of the 'raising States.' Bankruptcy, forced sales, as before stated, accounted for a good deal of this. And when the unfortunate Virginia negro found himself on one of the big cotton and sugar plantations of the semi-tropical States he became, speaking generally, a mere machine, worked to the very limit, and often beyond it, of his strength. He was regarded, in short, as an economic factor and as a work-horse would be regarded.

Some intimate Virginia friends and neighbours of ours had inherited a valuable sugar estate, with a full complement of slaves, on the Mississippi River, in Louisiana, and divided the year between it and their place in Virginia, both before the war and after it in our day. The sugar estate became

impossible under free labour. The Virginia place, a fairly good farm of a thousand acres, did moderately well, and became their permanent home. The head of the household, grave by temperament, as some Virginians were, and care-worn by troubles and rather unusual responsibilities, was one of the best men and most perfect gentlemen I ever knew, and his wife, who in youth must have been quite unusually beautiful, was one of the sweetest and best of women. The treatment of the negro in the far south had been quite a shock to these excellent people, used to the Virginia code, when they came into their Louisiana plantation. As they neither could, nor would, adapt themselves to it, above all, absolutely refusing to make Sunday a work-day, which was usual there, they encountered no little unpopularity. One consequence of this purely commercial view of the slave in the far south was the unrestrained licence of the latter after the war, and his unfitness for organised free labour, to say nothing of the frequent outrages such as the poisoning of animals, firing of buildings, and destruction of machinery. They were, in proportion to the whites, far more numerous in South Carolina and Louisiana. Since their deplorable misuse of the franchise and political power in the far south in the seventies, it is well understood that the whites have, by technical illegalities at the polling booths, secured themselves ever since against a repetition of such horrors.

There was nothing of this in Virginia. The negro has always voted peacefully, and always for the Republicans, as the whites are mainly Democrats. I never knew any one even attempt to influence his servants or labourers, much less use any power he might have over them. The negro vote and the Irish vote were always solid, like an undigested lump on the United States. There was some reason for the unanimity of the free negroes, from a fear lest their late masters, stung by their loss, should oppress them.

General Lee had ended his days at Lexington, just across the mountains from our neighbourhood, as President of the Military Institute there. He died just before I settled in the country, and a year or two before his death a pretty incident occurred in connection with that great soldier at a house where I was a frequent visitor. The owner of the said house had served as a major of artillery through the war. He was for a time on the general's staff, and otherwise knew him very well. One summer day Lee and his daughter rode over to pay his friends a visit, and before their arrival were drenched to the skin by a heavy thunderstorm, a mishap which necessitated their stopping for the night. The house was not far from a little country town, and the news rapidly spread to it, and from there throughout the surrounding country, that the beloved Commander-in-Chief of the Confederate armies was sleeping at ——. The town and neighbourhood was full of his old soldiers, few of whom had seen him since the war. My friends, all now dead, who were the general's entertainers, have often described the scene that their grounds, which were rather ample ones, presented next morning at breakfast. The garden was quite full. There were three or four hundred old ex-soldiers—farmers, lawyers, tradesmen, and others—all waiting round the house to greet their old general. Like many of the larger houses in Virginia, a corridor ran right through this one, with a door at each end. Both doors were thrown open, and Lee stood on the front porch while a procession of ex-soldiers went up the steps in a steady stream, each man shaking hands and having a word or two with their old commander, and passing on in rotation through the house and out at the back porch. The ceremony took two or three hours, and was distinguished by much enthusiasm and many touching scenes. This was some six years after the close of the war, and I could well understand

the impression it made on those who were so fortunate as to be able to provide the occasion.

Lexington, where Lee lived and died, and Stonewall Jackson lies buried, was a pretty little town most beautifully situated in the valley of Virginia, amid a well-cultivated, gracious, diversified country between the Blue Ridge and the Main Alleghanies within easy sight of both ; a country of clear rapid limestone streams and green turf, approaching that we are so used to in England as to be incapable of understanding the delight with which aliens regard it. Beyond this again and into the Alleghanies and the state of West Virginia, which was cut off from the old Dominion during the Civil War, you may travel through whole counties, beautiful to look at, remote from railroads, clad with noble timber, and sparsely settled by unsophisticated mountaineers, sometimes poor and ignorant like those of the Blue Ridge, but on the richer lands well-to-do and morally superior. In my day they were quite unambitious folk, always holding their rifles—for deer and bear were here plentiful—in higher regard than their often excellent little crops of wheat and oats, and their thrifty little herds of cattle. Outside enterprise has for the last twenty years been grappling with this mountain forest-clad country, though, having regard to the amazing development of the United States, progress here has been extraordinarily slow. Railroads into this tempestuous sea of mountains, though adjoining the very heart of American civilisation, have made but slow way. Wild land that in my time could be had for a dollar an acre, representing the valuable timber on the mountains, then useless for lack of transport and the fertility of the narrow valleys, is now, to be sure, worth five dollars. But it is mainly in the hands of lumber companies, who here and there are running small lines. There is natural grass-land on the lower slopes of these sequestered hills

that is probably the best in the United States; not prairie stuff, but fat, green feeding land like that of Leicestershire or Meath. A few civilised people, several English gentlemen among them, live up there, sending fat shorthorns to the big markets, and breeding sheep whose greatest enemies are, or were, the bears. And this within two hundred miles of Washington, and in a country that was overleaped by civilisation in the eighteenth century!

I was the first Englishman to visit the heart of this wild country. Only one man I knew in Old Virginia had ever been in there, but his accounts of beautiful grass-land, clear rapid streams, and fine timber, proved irresistible. Some visiting friends from England made the opportunity, and with a wagon, camp outfit, and a couple of negroes, we crossed the Blue Ridge, passed through the valley of Virginia, and then leaving civilisation, travelled some seventy more miles over rough mountain roads, crossed the watershed of the Alleghanies, and camped in a meadow of natural turf on the banks of a broad, clear, limestone stream, whose waters eventually found their way into the Mississippi. Here, in this sequestered Arcady, were mountaineers—half-hunters, half-farmers—and practically no one else, so remote was it from the world and all the accessories of civilisation. But these people were a class above the Blue Ridge folk, owing to the fine grass that grew naturally wherever the woods were cleared, to the good crops they could raise when they liked, and also to the amount of game—deer, bear, and turkeys—that then roamed the almost illimitable forests. Like the others, however, they were great trout fishermen with bait. It was May when we descended upon them. They had scarcely ever seen any strangers, and certainly no English people, before. They were very civil and pleasant, and we aroused much interest among them. Above all, we introduced them to fly-fishing, which

was at once a shock and a delight. I admit to feeling, the other day, a thrill of gratification when a friend who now has property in that country told me that my name is still remembered as ' the first man who ever threw a fancy bug on Elk.' For this was thirty odd years ago, and I have never been there since. Numbers of people, chiefly perhaps Englishmen of capital, some of them friends of mine, went up into that wild but beautiful country in the eighties, bought and improved land, and raised high-grade stock; and such as were equipped for that kind of life thoroughly enjoyed it and did well. It is indeed a unique country. There is nothing quite like it anywhere else in North America. But these counties are nothing like so wild as they were. The ripples at least of capital and progress have touched them. Land has risen, but I don't think population has very materially increased, though the trout are woefully thinned. Parties of tourists from distant cities make periodical raids on the streams, conducting their operations after the fashion known in the States as 'Trout-hogs.' The game has decreased, too, though sporting syndicates in the northern cities are by way of preserving vast areas of the mountain forests. Most of the mountain population here are probably descendants of the Ulstermen who settled in the then frontier of North America, and became the vanguard of the advance westward. A majority of them, though technically Southerners, had Federal sympathies in the Civil War, and had nothing whatever in common with old Virginia and slavery. The two negroes we took up with us on this occasion were quite exotics in that country, and were themselves almost as unhappy in it, I think, as was old Caleb on Rumbling Creek. One of them, like that veteran, took a pistol with him, and fired it off in the middle of the first night, waking up the whole party to its infinite rage. He said he thought he heard a ' bar '—

an animal which always sits heavily on the imagination of the Southern negro—but it turned out to be a cow!

I must conclude these scraps culled almost at random from the memories of many years, with a word on lynching, which has always been accounted among the amenities of Southern life. The only white man of 'good family'—*Anglice*, a gentleman more or less—who was ever lynched in Virginia, and probably in the whole South, was left dangling in early dawn on an oak tree of mine. This distinction was not awarded me of any set purpose, but merely because the said oak tree overhung the highway at a convenient distance from the country town whence the hapless though not undeserving victim had been dragged.

Now Virginia was really a most peaceable and quiet country. When there was a 'fuss,' however, even among the best people, there was always a chance of its ending in shooting—not, I regret to say, in the comparatively respectable and ceremonious formality of the duel, but in the regrettable incident commonly known as 'shooting on sight.' Several of these little affairs had recently occurred in the State, one or two of them of a cold-blooded nature, and the assassins—for that is what they practically were—had been in every case let off scatheless, or with trifling punishment, moral cowardice in this direction being a Southern failing. Juries wouldn't convict, and judges wouldn't sentence, out of regard for the feelings of the assassin's friends, who always exerted themselves by every technicality which American law offers to get the prisoner off. The better sort in Virginia were getting a little tired of the leniency with which several murderers, though they weren't called by that name in Virginia, had been treated, and just about then an atrocious shooting case occurred in our county. The rather good-for-nothing son of a respected but undistinguished general shot a young farmer dead in a

bar-room in the county town, on some most trifling provocation. The murderer was arrested, and temporarily disposed of in the town jail, more perhaps for his own safety from his victim's friends than from any reluctance to let him out on bail. The prisoner's friends as usual began casting about for some means of getting him out of the trouble. The general, his father, thought insanity would be a good plea, as there was no life sentence to Broadmoor involved in such an alternative in Virginia; whereupon he went to the leading local doctor and suggested that he should certify the young man to be of unsound mind. The doctor, however, was a man of character and high standing, no less in fact than that friend of General Lee mentioned on a former page, and with considerable curtness scouted the proposition and absolutely refused to make himself a party to any such fraud. Another shooting affair then seemed imminent, as the aggrieved father informed the doctor, who gave me an account of the interview, that he had better look out for himself next time they met. The other replied that he reckoned he was a better shot than the general, which was undoubtedly true, and that he despised his threats and his unworthy proposals.

Any further machinations, however, were, in this case, rendered superfluous. For the friends and relatives of the dead man, who lived at the other end of the county, had made up their minds that by some chicanery the murderer would eventually get off, and the crime had been a peculiarly cold-blooded one. So about three o'clock in the morning, a day or two later, when the little town was wrapped in slumber, a party of twenty masked men rode swiftly into it from the country, demanded the keys of the gaol—which it is generally the correct thing for a gaoler on such occasions to give up—and before any one was awake, carried the wretched prisoner about two miles out of the town, and

hung him on the first convenient tree on the road—which happened to be on my property, in full view of the house. We were in England at the time, and it was certainly a form of entertainment we were not sorry to miss. This is, I believe, the only lynching case of the kind that ever occurred in America, of a man of a respectable family, that is to say, being forcibly hung for merely shooting another of more or less similar position. As a matter of fact, it was an extremely salutary lesson, and did a great deal of good. Whatever may be the horrors of lynch-law as so often practised—though at that time almost unknown in Virginia—it was impossible not to sympathise with the general feeling that if ever such action could be justified, both in itself and by results, this one surely was.

The Episcopal Church of Virginia was in a rather depressed condition in my day. With the exception of a few well-ordered and well-supported churches in the towns, everything was extremely slack. Traditionally the Anglican Church was that of the upper class. Dissent, as it was called in Colonial days, when the Church was semi-established, had gained a strong hold among the middling and lower folk before the Revolutionary war. The partial expulsion of the better class, under the harsh confiscation policy against Loyalists, which disgraced the patriotic cause, greatly weakened the Church, and though a majority of its followers still remained, Anglicanism was so identified with 'English tyranny' among the commonalty that the Episcopalians had for long to suffer quietly much insult, and even outrage, against their faith. It survived, of course, and outgrew in time the prejudices of the mob, and remained the faith of most of the gentry. But the idea of associating architectural grace with worship never, I think, existed in Virginia. For people whose boast was, and still more in the retrospect is, that they were a well-to-do and

refined community, these churches were conspicuous for the absence of any trace of æsthetic intention, being almost invariably oblong brick structures without any effort at ecclesiastical convention. As they were in my day, so they had been before the Civil War. The diocese was Evangelical in doctrine, and slipshod in ritual. I have seen the bishop officiate in stand-up collars and a black tie. All this is altered, but I am not talking of present-day Virginia, which is quite uninteresting, but of old Virginia. The men chewed tobacco in church, and the pews were furnished with spittoons. The young men all waited outside the door till about the *Venite*, and then poured in *en bloc*, causing great and unnecessary disturbance. The parson, unless a very strong man, which he seldom was, couldn't protest overmuch, as he was dependent on his congregation for his meagre salary. After the blessing, when the worshippers rose from their knees, they entered at once, before leaving the building, into those social interchanges usually reserved for the open air, and the church became a babel of cheerful voices. There was not usually a graveyard round the building. People were buried on their own or their family acres. But there was always a grove of trees, and it presented during service a quite remarkable sight; for to every available branch of every tree was hitched the bridle of a saddle horse, or a horse and buggy, while in my day there were still to be seen some of the old family chariots hung on their leather springs. Some men rode to church, with their wives sitting behind them pillion fashion. Occasionally a *pater familias* might be seen with a child in front, and another, if not two, behind the saddle. 'Will he carry double?' was a frequent query in purchasing a horse. Most Virginia horses would carry anything, or do anything, they were so tractable and gentle, as well as tough.

In regard to this deplorable tobacco-chewing, a great friend of mine, an Englishman with ritualistic views and a strong sense of decency and devotion, became a very successful clergyman in the diocese of Tennessee, where the bishop was a High Churchman, and strongly combated the slipshod old-time Southern methods. A very handsome church was erected in a little town for my friend, then quite young in his profession, largely owing to the generosity of a certain Colonel W——. But the colonel was an inveterate tobacco-chewer, and my friend was equally determined to banish the hideous thing from his new church. Public opinion, too—this was in the eighties—was gradually moving in that direction. But the colonel, though a large donor and ardent churchman, was a serious difficulty. The young rector, however, took his courage in both hands, and eventually, by much eloquence, persuaded his patron, for he was practically that, to consent to the elimination of spittoons from the equipment of his new church.

It was the opening service: the colonel was sitting in the second pew from the front, and everything was going well. The rector—he has often described it to me—was reading the second lesson, and facing his people, when he saw the tall figure of his benefactor suddenly bend forward from the hips, place his two fingers to his mouth, and with the too familiar click send his shot accurately between the heads of the couple sitting immediately in front of him, to land on the floor beneath the chancel steps. The ruling passion was still too strong for the old gentleman. The change had been too sudden. My friend, who had a quite painfully developed sense of humour, still declares that this was the most trying moment of his whole life.

The same individual was once travelling as chaplain to his bishop, and they were on the train approaching their home in the city of Nashville, when, at the far end of the

car, he espied a well-known layman and staunch churchman of their acquaintance sitting with his grown-up son. But on walking over to accost them, he quickly discovered that the older man was very decidedly in his cups, and the son fully conscious of the awkwardness of the situation. 'Whatever we do, sir,' said he, 'we must keep father from the bishop. He has already been trying to get down the car to speak to him.' The sight of my friend stirred father up to renewed efforts at that undesirable encounter, so much so that his demonstrations became obvious to the prelate himself, upon which the chaplain, returning hastily to his chief, indicated the situation and suggested a move into the next car. Soon afterwards the train drew up at a station on the hither bank of the Cumberland River, here several hundred yards wide, on the opposite shore of which stood the city of Nashville, the home and destination of all concerned. The train here crossed the river on a low trestle bridge with no sides to it, lifted just above the water. 'Father' had already pursued the bishop into the next car, followed by his distracted offspring. Here, however, his wayward intentions were suddenly diverted into a resolution to get out at the little riverside station, which possessed very likely a secluded but familiar tavern, instead of proceeding to the city, and going dutifully to bed. A slight struggle then ensued, ending in the son's favour, who released his efforts as the train left the station and rolled out on to the bridge. This seemed to the misguided and befuddled parent his opportunity, so he slipped out at the end of the car, and stepped off its platform, only to walk feet first into the depths of the Cumberland River. There was then a great to-do. The engine was instantly stopped, and the cars backed up to the station, where the son and some others jumped out to the rescue, the train in the meantime proceeding on its way with the bishop and his chaplain,

both infinitely concerned, to Nashville. When they got to their quarters, and had been waiting for some time in much anxiety for news from the scene of the disaster, the son was suddenly announced. 'Well, Bishop,' said he, rushing into the room, 'father 's all right. He swam to shore, and *he 's the soberest man you ever saw!*'

CHAPTER XV

TWO SPORTING VENTURES

THOUGH there was plenty of sport to enliven the leisure hours of country life in Virginia, of which shooting the quick-flying Virginia partridge or large quail over dogs was the most enjoyable, a craving every now and again for some of the old English games such as in British colonies can generally be indulged in used to come over some of us. Scattered about all over a country nearly as large as England, and among a people who had very little notion of such things, we had to suppress our hereditary cravings, and try to forget them. Some efforts we made to revive old memories in this particular had their amusing side. But by far the most enterprising was when we mustered an eleven of Englishmen from various parts of the State, challenged Philadelphia, and actually played them upon their own ground. Once a year, twenty-two of us who were cricketers more or less (mostly less), used to forgather at a central district and play a scratch game on a wicket just about equivalent to an ordinary stubble field. The social occasion was pleasant enough, though the cricket facilities were farcical. Moreover, though cricket is accounted our national game, it is a popular delusion that most Englishmen are cricketers. In spite of compulsory games at public schools, not one Englishman in six, with such advantages, even professes to be an average cricketer after schoolboy age, while two out of three practically never play again, and do not care to. Most of them play other games; they

are much easier to pass muster at. Any one to whom it has fallen to promote cricket abroad, in places where Englishmen forgather, knows how scarce is even moderate competency at the noble game.

It was in 1876, the year of the great Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia celebrating the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, and Mr. Walter Powys, who, for some three or four years had been bowling for Cambridge, and for the Gentlemen *v.* Players, happened to be spending it in Virginia, where, I think, he had some property. If the reader will turn to his *Badminton* he will doubtless learn that this gentleman was the finest amateur bowler, as well as the fastest of his day. Well, Mr. Powys turned up at one of our annual gatherings, but the opposite side absolutely refused to stand up to him on an unrolled clover field. This, however, is by the way, but it was his fortuitous presence that caused an inspiration to flash upon me one summer day during a long lonely ride through the woods, and for which I myself and some others have always been thankful; for, though it became the cause of much anxiety, it produced also a quite treasured experience. In short, I determined that if Mr. Powys would join in the venture, and I could secure nine others of the little company who, once a year, made a pretence of playing cricket together, I would challenge Philadelphia. In a sense it was a most audacious proposition. But to be candid, none of us then knew anything about Philadelphia cricket, except the bare fact that it was almost the only place in the United States where the game flourished under regular auspices. With the light of after knowledge, I look back upon that impulse amid the Virginia woods as a most amazing piece of unintentional audacity, though modified, to be sure, by the saving clause of Mr. Powys. Every English cricketer of standing knows pretty well what a Philadelphia eleven amounts to, though

it is some time now since they have paid us a visit. But to give point to my story, the general reader may be reminded that when they come over here, they are usually pitted against the less formidable of the first-class counties, a pretty strong Marylebone team and selected elevens of Ireland and Scotland. They played the Australians once or twice on even terms at Philadelphia, and though, of course, outclassed, made a good match of it. At this moment of writing I see they have just defeated the latest Australian team, by accident, of course, just as a moderate English county sometimes defeats them. At home they usually beat with ease a picked eleven from all Canada, with whom they do, or did, play annually. An old member of my team, with no pretensions himself to be a cricketer, is now nevertheless a quite senior member of the Hampshire County Committee, and when we meet, we shout with laughter, and recall with delight our audacious venture at Philadelphia, which turned out so surprisingly well. As before intimated, I had at that time but the vaguest notion of the cricket talent of the Quaker city, for Virginia might have been in another continent. I succeeded, however, in securing the adherence of nine other innocents within a radius of two hundred miles, all public school or university men, to be sure, but including four or five at the most who, when in practice, would have been reasonably useful in the eleven of an average college at Oxford or Cambridge. The remainder were joyful and willing cricketers of no pretensions whatever. If they had returned to school like Mr. Bulstrode in *Vice Versa* they might have played in their second house eleven. But then there was Mr. Powys! He had only recently come down from Cambridge, had intimidated two or three successive Oxford elevens, and been held in respect by two or three teams of Players at Lord's and the Oval. With my im-

perfect knowledge of the Philadelphians, I reasoned with some justice that Mr. Powys, though assisted by very untrustworthy second-raters at the other end, might very well dispose of Philadelphia for something under three figures. And though he was himself useless as a bat, I calculated that with luck and the moderate bowling I innocently anticipated, and a good wicket, we might scrape up 70 or 80 runs, and at least avoid disgrace, which was all that mattered.

The Philadelphia secretary was prompt and willing, and two matches were arranged for us, one against the Philadelphia Club, the other against Germantown, both on the metropolitan ground where so many quite famous matches had been and have since been played. The fixture was in September, the best month for cricket in America, and my heart somehow began to fail me as it drew near, and one or two hints reached us of what like Philadelphia cricket really was. Indeed, I went so far as to write to the secretary and ask him not to meet us with too strong an eleven, pleading our weakness and the further disadvantages that not one of us could get any practice whatever, for most of us had not played for three, four, or five years! That was all very well, politely intimated the secretary, who had asked for and received a list of our team for publication and handbills (Good heavens! thought I), but what would a weak team make of Mr. Powys?—an unanswerable rejoinder. So the brief weeks of interval sped by, shadowed for me by the daily dread of some untoward news from the eastern shore, where our bowler, my sole hope and prop, might be exposing himself to mishaps innumerable. But all went well, and with a reassuring letter to that effect in my pocket, I and the youngest member of my team, the aforesaid Hampshire committee-man, went on to Philadelphia early in the day before the fateful one, to make

certain arrangements, and to spy out the land. The others, including our illustrious bowler, were to reach the hotel, which was the headquarters of the team, by an evening train. We two got there soon after midday, and if the occasion and the prospect weighed somewhat heavily upon the captain, the shock that awaited me at the hotel was such a knockdown blow as I should imagine, seeing the peculiar circumstances, had never been delivered to an unfortunate cricket manager. It was nothing less than the following telegram : 'Can't come, down with ague.—Powys.' I think the polite Philadelphia secretary who called immediately to escort me out to the scene of the impending and unequal conflict was much disappointed, while as for me, I was simply stunned. Mr. Powys was absolutely our sole justification, and indeed my merry men—the whole enterprise being in a sense my affair —might now almost rise up in wrath as my dupes, and strike at the prospect of spending two days in the field. To play with the great English bowler, or see him bowl, I knew very well would have covered many other shortcomings in the eyes of our hosts. But now! we were a pretty company, forsooth, to play a club that had recently made a fight with the Australians!

It was too late, however, to get out of it; and there was no chance of rain. The weather was brilliant and sparkling, and hopelessly confirmed in the habit. My young companion, however, was possessed, and is still possessed, of an abnormal exuberance of spirits, and looked at the situation wholly from that point of view. I couldn't myself—not likely. In due course we reached the then fine, large, level, and enclosed Germantown ground, with its pavilions, grandstand, and so forth. The practice nets were up, and a couple of English professionals in attendance, and it needs no saying the opportunity was eagerly seized. I remember how strange it all seemed after several years in the utterly

different atmosphere of Virginia, to find oneself in almost that of Lord's or the Oval, and being bowled at by a couple of English pros. On repairing later to the pavilion, I espied the score-book lying open on the table, obviously left there by accident when last used. Upon the open page I read '*Philadelphia*, *First Innings*,' and the usual list of eleven batsmen. But my blood ran cold as I saw distracting lines and double lines of figures extending endlessly from the names of the first four or five batsmen, choking the whole space, and beneath a blank, and then at the foot the total, 387—I remember well the exact figures.

'Good heavens! what is this?' (big scores weren't so common in those days), I said to the courteous secretary.

'Oh, that 's a match played two days ago against a Canadian team.'

'Surely not the "All Canada Eleven"?' said I faintly.

'Oh no,' said he, laughing. 'This lot came from Halifax. I think you 'll find their score on the preceding page.'

And there, to be sure, it was—*59*, and Halifax was a cricket-playing city encouraged by a considerable garrison. And who, and what, did we represent! What indeed!

'Is this the team that will play us to-morrow?' I inquired despairingly.

'Not quite; but it is pretty much the same.'

And so back to the city, first casting a conscience-stricken look at those tiers and tiers of empty seats that to-morrow would, in my fevered fancy, be full of scoffing spectators, almost in a mood to demand the return of their gate-money.

I had hitherto been anxious about some of my team, young sparks of uncertain temperament, when suddenly confronted by the unwonted glitter of a great city. I should now have been only too thankful if the whole lot

had broken away at Baltimore in a mad riot, and got locked up, or better still, and not less improbable in those days, if a bridge had given way with a freight train and blocked the line. However, they all turned up, and behaved like angels till the ceremonies were over.

Now Philadelphia cricket is altogether a thing unto itself. Whatever may be the case now in some of the swagger schools, run on English lines, in former days the Quaker city alone in the whole country cherished and cultivated the grand old game. For the St. George's Club of New York was kept up mainly by English public school and university men, who were naturally numerous in that cosmopolitan city. But Philadelphia was peculiar. The patrons of cricket there were wholly Americans, and those, too, almost entirely of the upper class. It owed nothing at all to English residents, or English initiative. For some generations it has been the pride and pleasure of the older and more conspicuous families to make cricket their game in thorough English fashion, a laudable attitude that has had its influence outside these particular circles. The sons of the cricketing families take naturally to the game, and have, of course, many followers. The ladies take an interest in it, and Society watches cricket and adorns its important functions as a natural and inherited duty, almost as mothers, wives, and sisters do in England. And it is necessary to understand how absolutely indifferent to, and ignorant of, the game are the rest of the nation, to realise what an oasis Philadelphia has always been in this particular respect. I believe there are more clubs and more players there now even than there used to be. That its gentlemen teams—for their professionals don't play the rôle they do with us—can meet Somerset or Hampshire or Derbyshire, Scotland or Ireland, is sufficient testimony to the excellence of so comparatively small a company, with almost no encourage-

ment in their own country outside a twenty-mile radius, and no recruiting-ground whatever among the rank and file of the population, who have no more taste for it than the populace of Chicago or Boston. When the fatal moment came, I was relieved to find that, thanks in part no doubt to the overwhelming attractions of the great exhibition, Philadelphia society was but scantily represented on the stands of the Germantown ground. We had supplied the place of Mr. Powys, speaking numerically, with a lively young Wykehamist of the town, who, if no support to our feebleness, was obviously such a favourite that he helped to make things go. So if we hadn't won the toss, we could at least have walked out eleven men to our places in the field, which last indeed required no little consideration. And this was something, considering the extended geographical area from which my scattered supporters had been drawn, and the long journeys they had most of them taken.

The most formidable of the Newhall brothers, the stars at that day of Philadelphia cricket, was bowling. I didn't know so much that morning as I came to know afterwards, or should have been still more uncomfortable, if that were possible. Dr. W. G. Grace has, I think, put in print his high opinion of that gentleman as a bowler. However, there he was! Well, to shorten my story, we acquitted ourselves nobly, beyond expectations, and made over 70 runs, which, seeing the quite extraordinary disadvantages under which we laboured, and what half of us were at the best, was highly meritorious, and in any case a figure quite removed from fiasco or disgrace. It was, in fact, about the score I had hoped for in my dreams far away in the forests of Virginia, when I had little conception of what talent existed in Philadelphia. I had myself enjoyed the enormous advantage of half an hour at the nets the preceding evening, and faced the bowlers with purely defensive resolutions,

such as never before, or since, had I ever made or, if made, kept. The wicket was perfect, and by these tactics I managed to keep up mine for about an hour, and made 28 runs. An ex-captain of a quite recent Westminster School eleven, who had only been cut off from cricket for two years, and was my chief hope, failed me, but the veteran of the party, our wicket-keeper, who had been also a cricketer, offered a most stubborn defence, and made respectable double figures. Our tail of non-cricketers frankly shut their eyes and let out, achieving between them two or three snicks or wild hits, that went for four. These, with some singles and extras, made up our respectable total, and I breathed more freely.

After lunch and a leisurely interval, which perhaps we did our best to extend, we went into the field and, of course, bowled and fielded all the afternoon. But a mid-September afternoon is fortunately limited as to light, and, moreover, I think we got them nearly all out somehow, for not much over 200 runs (it was before the days of 'declaration'), which again was meritorious, though doubtless our opponents took many liberties which they would have refrained from if we had been the Australians or even the Gentlemen of Ireland or an All Canadian eleven. I think our fielding wasn't bad, the weaker members making no scruple of stopping the relentless punishment given to some of our loose balls, with their shins at any rate, and if some went past them to the far end of the big smooth ground, they chased them with a speed and devotion never surpassed by any Australian out-fieldsman racing for the boundary, and they held their catches nobly. Four of us rang the changes on the bowling. It was a coincidence that the last and only time two of us had ever played in company we had bowled together throughout an innings for the old Wiltshire Wanderers at Wilton

Park, and owing to the weakness of our opponents, the Western Circuit, had achieved unmerited success—an omen we hailed joyfully, but which failed egregiously in the fulfilment, for both the representatives of Wiltshire were on this occasion sadly knocked about.

Two days afterwards we played on the same ground one of the other clubs, a weaker combination, and I enlisted the services of a visiting officer from Halifax, a good all-round cricketer. We entered the lists with confidence, and had an enjoyable and pretty even game. We were feasted hospitably at the Philadelphia Club and all the rest of it. And if my team were a scratch enough lot as cricketers, they were all pleasant, gentlemanly fellows, behaved beautifully, even the youngest among them, so far as I know, and left, I have reason to believe, a good impression of their type. A passing incident that occurred in this same week may be worth the telling. A two-day match had been arranged by the Philadelphia committee between Englishmen residing in the States and native Americans, otherwise a Philadelphia combination, which I was invited to stay for and play on the English side. Most of the latter were coming from New York, either members of or collected by the St. George's Cricket Club. At the very last moment, however, one of their men failed, and it was difficult at such short notice to replace him. But a prominent Irish member of the St. George's recalled the fact that his already well-known and soon to be still more famous compatriot, Charles Stewart Parnell, was on a visit to the city, and staying at a well-known hotel. He had known him in a social way pretty well in Ireland, and frequently met him on the cricket-field, an arena on which it may be remembered the uncrowned king was an ardent and quite tolerable performer; indeed so ardent that tradition in Ireland used to credit him with being an extremely bad loser.

So it was decided to try and get Parnell to make up the team, and as they had to start for Philadelphia rather early that day, the Irishman and the present Dean of Hereford, the Hon. and Rev. J. Leigh, who was then in the States, and also playing in the match, drove immediately to Parnell's hotel, where they found him still in bed. On entering his room they told him they wanted him to come with them and play a match in Philadelphia, but that there was little more than time to dress and catch the train. Parnell consented with alacrity, and, after a further word or two as to the train, was in the act of jumping out of bed, when he casually asked the nature of the match.

'England *v.* America,' was the reply.

'Oh, England *v.* America,' thoughtfully repeated the great man, checking his agility and sitting up in bed; 'I 'm afraid that won't quite do.'

His visitors thought he was joking; but he was quite serious, and no chaff with which his burly Irish visitor and old acquaintance was always free would move him.

'It won't do,' he said. 'It will get into the papers, and if I 'm playing on a side entitled "England" they 'll kick up a row at home.'

It was four or five years after this, when Parnell's fame gave interest to the recollection, that the Irishman related it to me in his own house in the Queen's County, and Dean Leigh, oddly enough, at his own table in London, told it me in the same year. Only the other day he was recalling it in the Close at Hereford.

We occasionally got up football matches, finding our opponents in the University of Virginia, which had just discovered the game, or in one or other of the good-sized boarding-schools which were situated in the country. This athletic activity was something utterly new to Southern youth, and indeed quite alien to old Southern

notions of life. A little irregular juvenile base-ball had been hitherto the sole athletic note. It was curious to watch the influence of the outer world, even in such trifles, gradually coming in from the then hated North; for the self-contained provincialism of Virginia had been astounding.

Just two years after our cricket match we had one other great diversion in the way of an Anglo-American contest. Now, the international regattas at the Philadelphia Exhibition had greatly stimulated rowing, which had just previously taken root in the larger Virginia towns, supplied as some of them were with beautiful rivercourses, and a good deal of racing under the best conditions was going forward. As it so happened, there were four of us living within easy reach of one another, and also within a few miles of the James River, who had all rowed in the proper sense of the word in the old country—two being Etonians and two Cantabs. We decided to get hold of a four-oared boat, put it on a beautiful stretch of the James River, some seven or eight miles distant, go into training, and challenge a crew of the Lynchburg Club, a well-equipped, rather enterprising society within reasonable reach. The difficulty was the boat. We solved it by a general subscription among the English element in that part of the country, all of whom, we pointed out, would share in the final entertainment without any of its labours, and had a boat built at Lynchburg. It was not an expensive craft, nor would it have passed muster on the Cam or Isis. It was, in fact, terribly heavy, but its width was approximately correct, its sliding seats acted reasonably well, and the riggers were satisfactory. The oars, I think, we borrowed from our rivals' ample store. The terms of the race, which was to be rowed at Lynchburg, were satisfactorily arranged, and the date fixed for the middle of October, when all serious agricultural work was

over and the crops housed. We launched the boat upon our own reach about a month before the event, and faced the matter seriously. That is to say, some three afternoons a week the five of us rode down on horseback, and thoroughly enjoyed driving our very moderate imitation of a racing four over the broad water that, since time began, had never borne any craft but a dug-out canoe, a horse ferry, or a barge. For cox we had my cheery and optimistic young friend who had been such a moral support to me in the darkest hours at Philadelphia, and is now, as I said before, a well-known Hampshire parson. I myself occupied the bow seat. No. 2 is now a very active and conspicuous member of Parliament. No. 3 was in one of those dreadful wrecks of liners on the coast of Cornwall some dozen or more years ago, was eight hours in the sea, hanging on to a spar, and apparently none the worse for it, though at the time over forty years of age. Our stroke, who was even then at least that age, is long dead. We went quite gaily, and tumbled rapidly into quite respectable form. We did not worry about diet, nor even, I think, give up smoking, for we were as hard as nails, and the American climate is favourable to such endeavours. We had no one to coach us, as the cox, though admirable with the lines, had no technical knowledge. But we all four of us knew the elements of rowing at any rate, and did our best to call attention to one another's lapses when possible. But speaking from the vantage-point of the bow seat, I may fairly say we performed quite creditably, and as regards our staying powers over a mile and a half, the distance of the racing course, that, at any rate, was soon beyond any manner of doubt. The sliding seats proved an incalculable blessing to people who had to be constantly on horseback, though they were new to some of us, having been first introduced in the early seventies.

As the day approached, we had to get our boat to the scene of operations, some twenty miles off, and at least half a dozen long shallow rapids intervened which we had to wade, and push our craft over as best we could. This was safely accomplished two or three days before the race, and we put up at a riverside tavern for a final practice over the course in quite orthodox fashion. Our rivals were practising at the same time, and by their form we thought, and with some cause, that we should win. But we didn't reckon sufficiently on brute strength and heavy boats, for we were a lightish crew.

The day of the race was beautifully fine, and about two thousand people turned out to see the fun, and lined the tow-path. It was a straight course of about a mile and a half up stream, and there would have been ample room for four or five boats to row abreast. Two of the opposing crew were amateurs, the others mechanics—a heavy and strong lot, but we thought our comparative form would tell.

The start was all that could be desired, and we had a hammer-and-tongs race for about a mile. We went off at thirty-six or more strokes to the minute by arrangement, as we hoped to fluster them a bit and shake them off. But we did neither, and rowed the whole course at a rather fast stroke, though it was a fearfully heavy boat, and our opponents had an advantage of us in this, though they had very fairly endeavoured to approximate their craft to ours in making a selection from their store. From my position at bow I may fairly say we performed, under the conditions, most creditably, and kept, for the most part, an even keel and excellent time. Our cox, at this time of writing, whose memory is phenomenal, tells me that No. 2 for a brief moment got into difficulties, but I do not recollect it. He had recently broken his leg riding a snake fence with an uneducated horse, for he kept a scratch pack of foxhounds,

and was not quite sound in that quarter. But about two-thirds of the way home the Virginians passed us, and I don't think it was our fault that we couldn't catch them again. We did our best, and certainly did not go to pieces, nor were in any way played out, nor lose such form as we possessed, and were tolerably fresh when we finished, unfortunately a length behind. We were outweighted by our opponents, and over-boated ourselves; but it was a great race, and gave enormous entertainment to the populace, who, I think, were generously divided in their sympathies. The local papers warmly commended our style, which is perhaps not saying much. We rode home to our respective domiciles, twenty odd miles distant, the evening of the race, and resumed our normal avocations. What became of the boat I do not know. It was not built for posterity, and had done its work rather badly. Generations hence it may peradventure be excavated from the bottom of the James River, and an American scientist may cause a transient flutter by suggesting that sliding seats were not unknown to the Indians in the days when Powhatan ruled upon this noble river, then called by his name, and his winsome daughter, Pocahontas, frisked with her maidens before Captain Smith upon its banks and made herself immortal. We were duly photographed the day before the race. I have a copy still, and though faded almost away, the portentously solemn expression upon every face, except that of the cox, which was incapable of it, suggests the impression that the reputation of our nation weighed insistently and heavily upon our souls, though I have no recollection myself of being thus oppressed.

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